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THE

PADMA-PURĀṆA

PART VII

TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY

Dr. N.A. DESHPANDE

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The purest gems lie hidden in the bottom of the ocean or in the depth of rocks. One has to dive into the ocean or delve into the rocks to find them out. Similarly, truth lies concealed in the language which with the passage of time has become obsolete. Man has to learn that language before he discovers that truth.

But he has neither the means nor the leisure to embark on that course. We have, therefore, planned to help him acquire knowledge by an easier course. We have started the series of Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology in English Translation. Our goal is to universalize knowledge through the most popular international medium of expression. The publication of the Purāṇas in English Translation is a step towards that goal.

PREFACE

With the publication of this seventh part of the Padma Purāṇa we have now made available forty-five volumes in the AITM series to the students and scholars of Indology. This part comprises chapters 1 – 81 of the sixth and the largest section, viz. Uttarakhaṇḍa of the Padma Purāṇa, consisting of a total of 255 chapters. Though the existing text of the Purāṇa is complete in seven sections, the Kriyāyogakhaṇḍa being the last, the present section in chapter 1, vv. 66 – 70 enumerates only five sections as belonging to the Purāṇa, omitting thus two sections, viz. the Brahma and Kriyāyoga. It appears that originally there were only five sections, the Uttarakhaṇḍa, as the name itself indicates, being the last one, but later two more sections were added. As to the period of time when this was done, Winternitz opines that it was perhaps after the composition of the Bhāgavata.

The major themes of this part are the birth, adventures and ultimate defeat and death of the demon Jālandhara in chapters 3—18 and a description of the Ekādaśī and other vows in chapters 30—70 and 77. There is a duplication of two names, viz. Putradā Ekādaśī and Kāmadā Ekādaśī, as the former occurs as the tittle of two chapters, 41 and 55, and the latter as that of chapters 47 and 63. This could be taken as one among the indications of the multiple authorship of the Purāṇa.

The reader will find the following informations gleaned from this part especially instructive.

The gods Śiva and Viṣṇu are not different but identical. "Viṣṇu is Śiva and Śiva is Viṣṇu." We can say that they are only functionally two but existentially one, and this has been emphasized by the Purāṇa frequently elsewhere also as an answer perhaps to the controversy arising from the appearance of divergent warring sects in course of time.

Ridiculing gods, their images and religious and sectarian practices associated with their worship due to egotism, parti-

cular sectarian leanings etc. is strongly disparaged. A brāhmaṇa indulging in this is declared to be a cāṇḍāla and one is said to undergo a very despicable birth for thousands of years in the form of "worms in feces."

Muttering God's names is recommended as especially efficacious in this age for freeing oneself from sins and attaining the highest spiritual position. "A man obtains by repeating the names of Viṣṇu in the Kali age what he obtains by meditation in the Kṛta age, by performing sacrifices in the Tretā age and by worshipping Viṣṇu in the Dvāpara age." The *Thousand Names of Viṣṇu* are narrated in chapter 71, but in the end it is said that the thousand names are equal to the single name 'Rāma'.

The author(s) of the Purāṇa has (have) a good sense of humor, as is proved on many occasions when we meet a ludicrous or incongruous situation in this part as well as elsewhere. God Brahmā is usually made a laughingstock on account of his beard. Once Brahmā takes the child Jālandhara in his lap when the latter catches his beard which the former is unable to free from his hand—this naturally makes the child's father Ocean laugh. In another situation, Śiva fashions a disc out of the tejas contributed by gods and sages for the destruction of the mighty demon Jālandhara. Śiva gives that disc into Brahmā's hands for inspection and appreciation. He seeing that the beard of Brahmā is burnt by the sparks issuing from the powerful weapon laughs and takes it quickly back. Brahmā is again made a butt of laughter when Kīrtimukha, a hungry attendant of Śiva, proceeds to eat Brahmā but is warded off by Śiva. Perhaps this indicates that the cult of this god of the Trinity had already declined and lost its popularity long before this Purāṇa was composed while the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava cults were still very much thriving.

There are so many passages in this part which show, as against the popular belief of there being one Nandin, that at least two Nandins existed in Śiva's entourage—one, the chief of Śiva's attendants (gaṇas) and a general of his army and the other, the bull, Śiva's vehicle. "Śiva said to Nandin, the chief of his attendants: 'You should kill the brave, great demon Jālandhara, in battle'." Again, "Then hearing the words of

Pārvatī Śiva said to Vīrabhadra: 'Quickly make ready my bull (i.e. Nandin)' " (ch. 12).

There occur many names of historical and geographical interest in this part too, which include some unfamiliar ones also, such as 'Go', a mountain (ch. 6, v. 22) and 'Gaṇḍikā', a sacred river (ch. 75), which are rather difficult to identify. The name '*Medinī*' (i.e. the earth) is explained thus: "The entire earth was filled with the marrow of the Ocean's son. O king, due to the marrow (*medas*) only Medinī got that name" (chap. 18, v. 109). A mythological origin of gems and metals is described in chap. 6, vv. 25—31. When Indra struck the demon Bala by his thunderbolt, the latter's body was shattered to pieces which fell on the earth. "From his eyes dropped sapphires. Rubies were produced from his ears...copper was produced from his urine...Gold was produced from his nails..."

Charity is extolled as a very great virtue. The gift of food, especially to a brāhmaṇa who is tired and travelling, is considered of exceptional merit. Offering food even to a śūdra is superior to any other gift. Giving food and water is considered the best of gifts. A preceptor is the most venerable of all the worthy recipients of gifts and a knower of the Purāṇas is the best recipient. Since he saves ('*tra*') a man from falling ('*pāṭa*'), he is called a '*pāṭra*' (a deserving recipient). Land is another praiseworthy gift destroying the great sins of murdering a brāhmaṇa, a woman, a child and killing cows. Snatching another's land and a brāhmaṇa's property are considered greatest sins. Incidentally, brāhmaṇa was the most privileged caste in ancient and medieval India deserving the highest veneration and protection by the state and society in view of his most vital role in society.

Acknowledgements

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—*Editor*

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ABBREVIATIONS

Common and self-evident abbreviations such as Ch(s)—Chapter(s), p—page, pp—pages, v—verse, vv—verses, Ftn—Footnote, Hist. Ind. Philo.—History of Indian Philosophy are not included in this list.

ABORI	*Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Poona
AGP	S.M. Ali's *The Geography of Purāṇas*, PPH, New Delhi, 1973
AIHT	*Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, F. E. Pargiter, Motilal Banarsidass (MLBD), Delhi
AITM	*Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology* Series, MLBD, Delhi
AP	*Agni Purāṇa*, Guru Mandal Edition (GM), Calcutta, 1957
Arch. S.Rep.	Archaeological Survey Report
AV	*Atharva Veda*, Svādhyāya Maṇḍal, Aundh
Bd. P.	*Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, MLBD, Delhi 1973
BG	*Bhagavadgītā*
Bh. P.	*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Bhagavat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad
Br.	*Brāhmaṇa* (preceded by name such as Śatapatha)
BS. P.	*Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*, Vishnu Shastri Bapat, Wai
BV. P.	*Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*, GM, 1955-57
CC	*Caturvarga Cintāmaṇi* by Hemādri
CVS	*Caraṇa Vyūha Sūtra* by Śaunaka, Com. by Mahīdāsa
DB	*Devī Bhāgavata*, GM, 1960-61
De or GDAMI	*The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval India*, N.L. De, Oriental Reprint, Delhi, 1971
Dh. S.	*Dharma Sūtra* (preceded by the author's name such as Gautama)
ERE	*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* by Hastings
GP	*Garuḍa Purāṇa*, ed. R. S. Bhattacharya, Chowkhamba, Varanasi, 1964

GS	*Gṛhya Sūtra* (preceded by the name of the author such as Āpastamba)
HD	*History of Dharma Śāstra*, P.V. Kane, G. O. S.
IA	*The Indian Antiquary*
IHQ	*The Indian Historical Quarterly*
JP	*Purāṇa* (Journal of the Kashiraj Trust), Varanasi
KA	*Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra*
KP	*Kūrma Purāṇa*, Veṅkaṭeśvara Press Edn., Bombay; also Kashiraj Trust Edn., Varanasi, 1971
LP	*Liṅga Purāṇa*, GM, 1960; also MLBD, Delhi, 1981
Manu.	*Manusmṛti*
Mbh.	*Mahābhārata*, Gītā Press, Gorakhpur, VS 2014
MkP	*Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*
MN	*Mahābhārata Nāmānukramaṇī*, Gītā Press, Gorakhpur, VS 2016
MtP	*Matsya Purāṇa*, GM, 1954
MW	Monier Williams' *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, MLBD, Delhi, 1976
NP	*Nāradīya* or *Nārada Purāṇa*, Veṅkaṭeśvara Press, Bombay
PCK	*Bhāratavarṣīya Prācīna Caritrakośa*, Siddheshwar Shastri, Poona, 1968
Pd. P.	*Padma Purāṇa*, GM, 1957-59
PE	*Purāṇic Encyclopaedia*, V. Mani, English version, MLBD, Delhi, 1975
PR or PRHRC	*Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, R. C. Hazra, Calcutta, 1948
ṚV	*Ṛg-Veda*, Svādhyāya Maṇḍal, Aundh
Śat. Br.	*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*
SC or SMC	*Smṛti Candrikā* by Devanna Bhaṭṭa
SEP	*Studies in Epics and Purāṇas*, A.D. Pusalkar, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (BVB), Bombay

VI UTTARAKHAṆḌA

(The Sequel or Concluding Section)

CHAPTER ONE

The Contents of the Section in Brief

1-2. Om, salutation to Śrī Viṣṇu. Om salutation to Śrī Veda-vyāsa.

Om, having saluted Nārāyaṇa, so also Nara, the best among men, and goddess Sarasvatī and Vyāsa, one should narrate the (god's) glory. Salutation to the preceptor who opened the eyes of one who is blind due to the darkness of ignorance with the pencil of the collyrium of knowledge.

The sages said:

3-4. O best among the learned, we have heard the Pātāla-khaṇḍa full of various accounts and giving great joy, which you narrated (to us). Now we desire to hear what remains (i.e. the remaining portion) of the Padma (Purāṇa), and which augments devotion to the lord. O preceptor, please narrate it.

Sūta said:

5-7a. O sages, listen, all of you, to what Śaṅkara told Nārada who asked him, and which is the knowledge that destroys sins. Once Nārada, dear to the lord, while roaming over the worlds went to Mandara mountain to ask Śambhu some secret. There he saluted the lord of Umā who was seated. Directed by Śiva's order, he sat on a seat in front of the lord. He asked the god the same as you, the best ones, have asked.

Nārada said:

7b-8. O lord, O god of gods, O lord of Pārvatī, O preceptor

of the world, tell me that by which the knowledge about the truth of lord can be had.

Śiva said:

9-15. O Nārada, listen to the Purāṇa which I shall tell you, which is like the Vedas and hearing which a man is free from all sins. There is no doubt about it. First there is the glory of Uttara. Then there is the story of the Parvata (Mountain). Then there is the narration of Haridvāra; then there is the account of (Gaṅgā) rising from Viṣṇu's feet. I shall also describe the holy place of Prayāga, so also the (holy place called) Aśvamedhika. I shall tell (you) about the greatness of Tulasī; so also (I shall describe) the conch, the disc, the mace etc. Then there is the account of Dvārakā. (Then there are) the rules about a great festival. (So also) there is the description of the religious merit obtained from (bathing in) a lake, so also (from bathing in) a reservoir of water, a well, or a cistern; (there is the description of the views of) the Gāṇapatya, of the holy texts of the Vaiṣṇavas; (then) there is (the description) of the greatness of repairs (of old temples etc.); of visiting Gangā; of the greatness of Sābhramatī; so also of the banks (of rivers etc.), of the duties of women and śūdras and of what (course) should be followed by those who are forsaken.

16-19. In the dialogue between Umā and Maheśa *The Thousand Names of Viṣṇu* are told. That was brought from Kailāsa by Nārada, the brāhmaṇa. It should be recited with a concentrated mind to the people, brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas and especially to women and śūdras. It is holy; it is pure; it increases (the span of) life; it should be especially recited; (thereby a man) would obtain intimate union with Viṣṇu. That hymn containing the thousand names of Viṣṇu is known in the world to be purifying. It (i.e. the Uttarakhaṇḍa) will tell about the places of the twentyfour images.

20-24a. I shall tell about their parents and their interior. I shall also tell you about their family, their Vedas, their deeds; so also about their wives, as I see these from my knowledge. (I shall tell you) about the importance of the twentyfour Ekādaśī days and Dvādaśī days. (I shall narrate to you) the greatness of Godāvarī; so also about putting on (one's person) the conch and

ths disc. Brāhmaṇas especially should put these on with a rite. O sage, I shall describe to you the importance of Yamunā, so also of Gaṇḍikā. I shall undoubtedly tell you about the greatness of Vetravatī. (I shall tell you) about the religious merit due to (a visit to) the holy place called Gilli. I shall describe to you the Śilā Kṣetra which is great.

24b-28. All that I shall describe in the Khaṇḍa called Uttara. (I shall narrate to you) the greatness of Arbudeśvara and the holy places etc. that are there. (I shall similarly tell you about) the importance of Sarasvatī and the holy place called Siddhakṣetra. (I shall tell you about) the rise of Padmanābha and the wearing of Tulasī(-leaves etc.). (I shall tell you about) the greatness of gopīcandana, and about the worship of the throne. (I shall describe to you) the greatness of Nirañjana (i.e. Śiva); so also about the vision of knowledge; so also about offering of lights there, and especially of incense. (I shall tell you about) the importance of Kārtika and also that of Māgha. I shall tell you about the greatness of all vows (performed) duly.

29-33a. O Nārada, I shall tell you about (the holy place of) Jagannātha, the best one, seeing whom men are freed from the sin of the murder of a brāhmaṇa etc. (Please) listen; whatever is performed and experienced there gives (i.e. leads one to) the other world. (Even) brāhmaṇas, well-versed in the Vedas eat there; then what to say about other people, O you of a good vow! Here there are twentyfive serpents and various famale dancers also. On seeing Jagannātha (the sins due to murders such as) the murder of a brāhmaṇa, the murder of a child or that of a cow, all perish. A being (just while) uttering (the name) *Jagannātha* is free from great sins.

33b-36. I shall tell you about Viṣṇu's worship with flowers, and its importance also. I shall tell you all that—the description of the mountains; so also the description of countries; so also the supreme greatness of worshipping the cow etc.; so also about the worship of the siddhas; (I shall also tell you about) the religious merit which is obtained when boiled rice is given (to brāhmaṇas). (I shall tell you about) the gift of the interior of a Kadalī; the gift of a tree. After that (I shall tell you about) the gift of a horse; the gift of an elephant; so also about the supreme importance of muttering (a hymn); so also about the

knowledge of hymns and initiation; about the characteristics of a preceptor.

37-43. In (the Uttarakhaṇḍa) the characteristics of a disciple, as the public readers of the Purāṇas know them, are also told. (So also it contains) the importance of the water (flowing) from the feet (of the superiors), and (the information about) śrāddha etc. offered to the dead ancestors; (it also contains information about) the gift to the manes on the days (fixed for making offerings to them); so also the rite of giving sapphires. (It also contains information about) the lunar and solar eclipses and (about) what gifts should be (given on these days). (It tells about) the importance of the gift of a Śālagrāma (stone); so also of flowers and sandal; about the time of the tenth, eleventh and twelfth (days) and about the days sacred to Viṣṇu. (It contains information about) their greatness and the names of Rudra etc. (It also gives the information about) the greatness of Mathurā, and (about) Kurukṣetra etc. (It also contains) the account of the construction of the bridge (over the sea); so also (the account) of Śrī Rāmeśvara. (It also contains the information about) the greatness of Tryambaka, and (about) the fruit of (staying at) Pañcavaṭī. O best brāhmaṇa, listen to the importance of the Daṇḍaka forest. (It tells about) the greatness of the Daṇḍaka forest and about the cause of the birth of Nṛsiṁha. (It tells about) the greatness of the Gītā; so also of the Bhāgavata, so also the importance of Kālindī (i.e. Yamunā), and the description of Indraprastha.

44-50. (It contains) the life of Rukmāṅgada and (tells about) the greatness of a devotee of Viṣṇu. O best brāhmaṇa, listen; if a devotee of Viṣṇu is fed but once, the man who feeds him gets that fruit which he would obtain by giving the entire earth along with ocean. The sāttvika are endowed with goodness; the rājasa are said to be lustful. The tāmasa are described to be vicious. The characteristics of the devotees of Viṣṇu are also described (in it). O Nārada, I shall tell you about the greatness, as described, of the brāhmaṇas who are devotees of Viṣṇu and who are intent upon practising the way of life as told in the Vedas. O best sage, then I shall tell you about the sin of those who, through greed for wealth, are engaged in censuring Viṣṇu. (I shall tell) you the account of Jvālāmukhī, and (about the importance

of) seeing the Himālaya. I shall describe to you the region where Brahmā was born. I shell tell you about the origin of kāyasthas; so also the account of Gayā. (I shall describe to you) the nature of Gadādhara and (give you) the description of (the river at Gayā called) Phalgu.

51-56a. In the Padma (Purāṇa), the importance of these is seen (and) is also heard (from it). (It also contains) the nature of great knowledge, and the glory of Kalki. (It contains the description of) Rāmagayā and Pretaśilā. I shall tell you the account of Brahmā and Śilā; so also the account of Brahmā's origin, and of the bunyan tree called Akṣaya. Great religious merit (accrues) by (performing) a śrāddha there. I shall tell (you) all about that. (I shall tell you about) the worship of Śiva done by the noble Viṣṇu. Even now Mahārudra mutters (the names of) Anāmaya (i.e. Viṣṇu). After that, O Nārada, I shall describe to you the greatness of the ocean; so also the religious merit due to the offering of sesamum seeds and also due to (the offering of) barley-grains; so also (the religious merit) due to the offering of water mixed with Tulasī leaves and due to the (worship of) deity.

56b-59a. I shall tell you about its greatness as Brahmā told it to me. (I shall describe to you) the greatness of the sound of the conch and religious merit of its innumerable (varieties). (I shall tell you about) the greatness of Sunday, and of abstract maditation on him called Viṣṇu. (I shall tell you) the importance of Vaidhṛta and also of Vyatīpāta (i.e. a great calamity). O Nārada, I shall tell you all this, as has been told.

59b-64. Uttarakhaṇḍa tells about the gift of food, the gift of garments, the gift of land, so also (of) a bull, about the greatness of Janmāṣṭamī, the importance of the Matsya (Purāṇa), the importance of the Kūrma (Purāṇa) and so also of the Vārāha (Purāṇa). I shall also tell (you) the importance of the gifts of cows etc. After that I shall describe to you the greatness of the devotees like Prahlāda, who are well-known on the earth. Listen, O best divine sage. O best divine sage, (it contains) the importance of keeping awake (during certain nights); so also of the gift of lamps; so also (it tells about) the fruit of the separate worship (offered) during different watches. (It contains) the account

of Paraśurāma; so also (of) the murder of Reṇukā; so also (of) the gift of land made to brāhmaṇas and whatever Rāma did.

65-66a. I shall describe fully the religious merit due to (the stay in) Rāma's hermitage. I shall tell you the account of Narmadā, and that of the religious merit and the worship; so also (I shall tell you about) the gift of (the texts of) the Vedas and the Purāṇas and the form of the (various) stages of life.

66b-70. (I shall tell you about) the religious merit due to the gift of gold and that of the world; (about) the gift of the Padma Purāṇa and the nature of (its) Khaṇḍas. The first is Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa; the second is Bhūmikhaṇḍa. The third is Svargakhaṇḍa and the fourth is called Pātāla. The fifth is called Uttara. These are the Khaṇḍas in order. The noble Vyāsa composed this Padma Purāṇa for the well-being of the people and for the welfare of brāhmaṇas. It creates religious merit in śūdras, and removes acute poverty. It gives salvation and happiness and quickly brings about inexhaustible good fortune. O Nārada, having listened to it, a man should give gifts according to the rite (told therein).

CHAPTER TWO

Nārāyaṇa Grants Boons to Rudra

Maheśa said:

1-8a. There are one lakh and twentyfive thousand mountains. In the midst of them stands the very holy, excellent Badarikāśrama where, O Nārada, lives Nara-Nārāyaṇa. I shall now tell (you about) his nature and lustre. O brāhmaṇa, two men, of the form of Kṛṣṇa and called Nara and Nārāyaṇa, live on the peak of the Himālaya. One man is white; the other one is black. Those striving (to reach) the Himālaya go along that path (and reach them). The great lord is of a tawny and fair complexion and has matted hair. This is Kṛṣṇa, Nārāyaṇa, the origin of the world and the great lord. He has four arms; he is great; is rich (or has Lakṣmī); is manifest; is unmanifest; and is

ancient. O you of a good vow, in the period of the summer solstice a great worship takes place there. (Then) for six months no worship is offered. The (region) is then covered with snow till the period of the winter solstice sets in. Therefore, such a deity was never there seen in the past nor will ever be in future.

8b-12. Gods live there; so also the hermitages of the sages are there. The oblations to Agni are made, the Vedas (are recited, and so) the sound (of their recital) is always heard there. A man should see the deity; it destroys (the sin of) a crore murders. A man should bathe where there is Alakanandā-Gaṅgā (confluence). He is free from a great sin after bathing there. There is no doubt that the god, the lord of the universe, dwells there. O brāhmaṇa, on one occasion I practised good (i.e. severe) penance (there). Then god Nārāyaṇa who favours his devotees, who is the immutable Puruṣa, who is actually the god having Garuḍa as his banner, was very much pleased, and said to me: "O you of a good vow, ask for a boon".

Śrī Nārāyaṇa said:

13. O god, whatever desire you have, I shall fulfil it. You are the lord of Kailāsa; you are actually Rudra, the protector of the universe.

Rudra said:

14-18. O god Janārdana, you are well-pleased. I shall completely accept (the boons). If you desire to grant boons, then grant me two boons. Let me always have devotion to you. I shall be (i.e. let me be) the chief among the devotees. Let all people say: 'This one is a constant devotee'. O lord, through your favour I shall be the giver of salvation. I shall grant (salvation) to those people who will resort to me. There is no doubt about this. In the world I shall be famous as Viṣṇu's devotee. O lord, let him whom I (will) grant a boon, have salvation. I, having matted hair, and with my body smeared with sacred ash, (would stay) near you. By the grace of your feet I shall be well-known in the world.

CHAPTER THREE

Jālandhara Is Born and Blessed by Brahmā

Sūta said:

1-6. Once Nārada went to the Kāmya forest to see the Pāṇḍavas emaciated due to grief. They properly received the brāhmaṇa. Then saluting the greatest sage, Yudhiṣṭhira said: "O venerable one, due to which act (of ours) have we fallen into this ocean of distress?" To him the sage said, "O son of Pāṇḍu, give up your grief. Which man is happy in this mundane existence which is an assemblage of pleasures and pains? Even the lord is not stable. He is troubled by the heaps of bodies. Nobody is free from grief; everyone has to put up with grief, since (even) the Sun's body is seized by Rāhu. Rāhu's head is also cut off by Viṣṇu at the time of enjoying (i.e. drinking) nectar. That god holding the Śārṅga bow (i.e. god Viṣṇu) also was thrown into the deep ocean by brave Jālandhara. He too was killed by Śiva."

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

7-8. Who was that brave Jālandhara? Whose son was he? Due to what was he strong? How did the bull-bannered god (Śiva) kill Jālandhara in a battle? O you treasure of penance, tell me all this in detail.

Thus addressed by the king (Yudhiṣṭhira), Nārada told (it).

Nārada said:

9. O king, listen to the divine tale which destroys the entire stream of sins; so also (listen to) the very wonderful (account of) the battle between Śiva and (Jālandhara) the son of the Ocean.

10-15. Once Indra who was crowded with the bevies of celestial nymphs, who was surrounded by many gods, who was crowded by gandharvas well-versed in the art of (playing upon) the lute, went to praise Śiva. (The celestial nymphs) Rambhā, Tilottamā, Rāmā, Karpūrā, so also Kadalī and Madanā, Bhāratī, Kāmā adorned with all ornaments and other female dancers went into the vicinity of the god (Śiva). Gandharvas, yakṣas, siddhas, so also Nārada and Tumburu, and kinnaras and female kinnaras repeatedly came there. So also

Vāyu, Varuṇa, Kubera, the giver of wealth, Yama, Agni, Nirṛti, so also other groups of deities (went there). Indra, seated in an aeroplane, celestial ladies seated in aeroplanes, and (other) gods seated in their own vehicles speedily went to Kailāsa.

16-23a. Then the gods saw that Kailāsa, an excellent mountain, the best among all the mountains, the ornament of the earth as it were. It stood giving pleasure on all sides, (was) pure and (stood) like the heap of superhuman powers. The trees there were the desire-yielding trees. The stones there gave whatever was desired. The mountain looked charming due to punnāga, nāga, campā, tilakā, devadāru, aśoka, pāṭala, mango, mandāra (trees). The breezes there carried the fragrance from the adjoining forest. The breezes from the Malaya (mountain) became crippled on account of a great movement. The wells there had crystal staircases, and their water was clean and deep. The lotuses (in them) resembling gold had clung to the emerald-like stalks. There the brightness of the white lotuses shone in all directions. The wells there were beautiful with white lotuses, and were covered with rubies. They were decked with green gems and were, on all sides, covered with the gomeda[1] (gems). They were constructed with ruby-stones, and were beautified with various minerals. They saw the Kailāsa mountain, more beautiful than heaven, and fashioned superior to it.

23b-30a. Seeing that greatest mountain Kailāsa, they were amazed. Indra and those deities got down from their aeroplanes. Then having come to Nandin, the door-keeper, they spoke (these) words: "O you best among the excellent attendants, listen to these good words: Quickly inform respectfully the lord of gods that the chief of gods (Indra), surrounded by all gods, has come here to dance." Having heard (these) words of Indra, Nandin said to Śiva: "O lord, this lord of gods, Indra, has come here with all (deities) to dance." Then (Śiva) said to him: "Quickly bring (in) the lord of Śacī (i.e. Indra)." Then Nandin brought in Indra along with them. He (i.e. Indra) seeing god Śiva, having the bull as his banner, praised him. All the female

1. Gomeda: A gem brought from the Himālayas and the Indus, described as of four different colours, viz. white, pale, yellow-red, and dark-blue.

dancers like Rambhā gladly danced there, near Śiva, with (i.e. to the accompaniment of) tabors, lutes and (other) musical instruments. Others, holding bell-metal musical instruments, lutes and large drums performed a zealous dance.

30b-34a. Indra himself excessively performed a beautiful dance, difficult (to be seen even) by gods. The god was delighted, (and) spoke (these) words to Indra: "O best among the gods, I am pleased with you. Ask for a boon". When the god of gods (i.e. Śiva) spoke like this, Indra who was proud of the might of his arms, said in reply (these) words to Hara (i.e. Śiva): "I ask for that battle in which I shall have a warrior like you (to fight with). O lord, grant me such a battle." Saying so, and having obtained a boon from lord Śiva, he went out.

34b-37a. When that Indra had left, Śiva said (these) words: "O attendants, listen to my words. The chief of gods has become very proud." Saying so, Śiva then became angry. Then his wrath manifested itself in a bodily form, and stood before him; (that) wrath, (dark) as dense darkness, then said to Śiva: "Give me the order. O lord, what do (i.e. should) I do for you?"

37b-41a. Then (Śiva) the lord of Umā said: "You, the brave one, (should) after reaching the heavenly river of the Ocean, go and conquer Indra." That wrath that was told like this, vanished. Those attendants were amazed. When the lord's ordinance took place, the celestial river due to the heat of her excessive youth, was excited with lust; and seeing her, the lordly Ocean was full of the billows of water. Then, O best king, the union between Gaṅgā and the Ocean took place. The great river, reaching (the Ocean) enjoyed according to her might.

41b-43. Meantime, a mighty, very brave son was born on the great river by the Ocean. O king, the son of the great Ocean, weeping as soon as he was born, shook the earth. The three worlds resounded. Brahmā gave up the position of his fingers formed during profound concentration.

44-45. Meantime (Brahmā) the creator seeing the three worlds alarmed, went to the great Ocean at the words of Indra. Thinking that it was a wonder, he, mounted on his swan, speedily went (to the Ocean). Seeing Brahmā to have arrived, the Ocean offered him worship. Then Brahmā said to him: "O Ocean, why do you roar in vain?"

The Ocean said:

46-48a. O lord of gods, I am not roaring. It is my mighty son (that is roaring). (Please) protect my child. To see you is difficult.

"Let the son be seen (i.e. Present the son to Brahmā)." (Thus) he spoke to his very charming wife. She, at the behest of her husband, approached Brahmā along with the son. Putting him on the lap of Brahmā, she saluted his feet.

48b-49. Then seeing the Ocean's son, Brahmā was indeed amazed. When Brahmā was unable to free from the hand of the child his beard seized by the child, the Ocean laughed and freeing the beard from the child's hand, seized the child's hand and left.

50. The self-born (Brahmā), seeing the child's valour like that, affectionately called him Jālandhara, and he became Jālandhara by name (i.e. was named Jālandhara).

51-52. The lord of the beings (i.e. Brahmā) affectionately granted him a boon: "This Jālandhara will be unconquerable (even) by gods. By my favour he will enjoy (the lordship of) the heaven along with the nether world." Speaking like this, Brahmā, mounting upon his swan, hurriedly disappeared.

CHAPTER FOUR

Jālandhara's Marriage and Consecration

Nārada said:

1-5. That boy thus gradually growing in his childhood, jumped on his mother's lap and ran to the ocean. Having brought the young ones of lions he, intent upon playing, put them into cages. Thus his was a fight of a lion with an elephant etc.; his valour was useful for a fight. From there he would fly into the sky and would drop down the birds on the ground. He, by means of his roars, frightened the heaven along with the ocean. O king, all the beings in the ocean were stricken by him

and due to his fear they concealed themselves. Seeing the water (of the ocean) without beings the submarine Fire, due to his fear, left his own region and entered the Himālaya (mountain).

6-8. That son of the Ocean gradually gave up childhood, reached youth, and valorously went to the heaven. Once the Ocean's son (i.e. Jālandhara) said to his father, the Ocean: "O father, give a very extensive place proper for my residence." Having understood the words of his son, the great Ocean said: "O son, I shall give you a kingdom difficult to be obtained on the earth."

9-10. Then Bhārgava (i.e. Śukra), the preceptor of the demons, went to the Ocean. Seeing him coming, the Ocean worshipped him duly. Then when he was seated on the seat which had the lustre of gems having beauty spreading out, and which was offered by the lord of rivers, he had the great lustre like that of the lotus-born (Brahmā seated) upon the beautiful region of the peak of the Meru mountain charming with lustre.

11-13. The Ocean, joining the palms of his hands, said to Śukra: "Luckily (for me) you have come here. Tell me what I should do." Then Śukra, the preceptor of the family of demons, said to the Ocean: "What is the use of him who, being born, (simply) robs his mother of her youth, and does not grow above (the members of) his own family like a flag? Your son, due to his valour, will certainly enjoy the three worlds.

14-17. You have inundated a great seat on the Jambūdvīpa which is resorted to by the female attendants of Durgā. Give it up as the abode of Jālandhara. O great Ocean, give the kingdom there (i.e. of that region) to this son of yours. Being there he will be unconquerable and free from death." The Ocean thus addressed by Bhārgava (i.e. Śukra) with love, easily moved away, and due to his love for his son, showed (him) the place in the water. It was a hundred yojanas extensive, and was three hundred yojanas long. The auspicious country was well-known as Jālandhara after him.

18-31. The Ocean having called the excellent demon Maya, said to him: "Fashion a city for Jālandhara in the seat (i.e. region) of Jālandhara." Thus told by the ocean, Maya fashioned a city full of gems, having ramparts and city gates and having houses with staircases. In it the peacocks, engaged in violent

dances, and remaining on the grounds of the mansions decked with sapphires took them to be the movement of the clouds. In it the birds resorted to the rays rising from the ground (decked) with corals and rubies, taking them to be the lovely mango-sprouts. In it the peacocks, seeing in the golden mansions, the brilliance (as) in fires, ran away fearing it to be the wild fire. In it the directions are mingled with the lustre coming up from the crystal chambers. They appear as it were rising from the Mandara (mountain), and resemble the ocean with foam. In it the bright women, standing in groups in their mansions and with their faces resembling the full moon of the evening caused infatuation. In it the joys from the park with breezes made fragrant by indranīpa flowers etc. entered the women's hearts and brought about the fever of fascination (in their hearts). In it a man, on seeing a coitus drawn in a picture, doubly indulges in it while engaged in a coitus with his wife. In it the lines of the smoke of the incense rising from the windows have become the sky resembling the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā. The entire sky in (i.e. above) it looks like being covered with a rainbow due to the lustre coming out from many houses and with autumnal cloud rising in it. In it the horses of the Sun, that have constantly wandered (and therefore are) very much vexed, take rest after remaining on the tops of mansions at midday. In it the excellent women in some of the mansions, wearing jasmine wreaths, shone like stars rising at night. In it the sound due to the friction of the chains of the golden swing made the ground beautiful like that of the Meru (mountain).

32-33. The Ocean along with the rivers and with Śukra consecrated there his son (as the king) with self-sounding musical instruments. We expect (i.e. think) that (Śukra) performed the auspicious rite at the time of the marriage of the Earth (with Jālandhara and his consecration as the king) with gay incantations and with words—the beautiful female swans as it were, in the lake of the mouth of Brahmā, with which the self-lustrous self-born (Brahmā) (performed the auspicious rite) at the time of Skanda's victory over Tāraka, and with which Bṛhaspati (the preceptor of gods) performed (the auspicious rite) at the time of the festival of the sovereignty of Indra.

34-36. The great Ocean gave Jālandhara a fierce army that

sprang from his interior and that (amounted to) a thousand mahāpadmas. Śukra also gave Jālandhara through love his infatuating lore called *Mṛta-sañjīvanī* and infatuating Rudra. Brahmā also gave the Ocean's son (i.e. Jālandhara) various other lores (secrets) of weapons and missiles. All else was then explained to him by Śukra.

37-40. Then having consecrated Jālandhara, his son, the Ocean, surrounded by the rivers, went with a divine body to his place. Jālandhara saw that divine city adorned with city gates; and being well honoured by groups of brāhmaṇas, moved with Śukra (into the city). In the meanwhile all the very mighty demons residing in the nether world and led by Kālanemi, came to Jālandhara. Then the very mighty heroes appointed the demon Śumbhāsura the general of the army resembling the milky ocean.

41-44. Then that Jālandhara, having brought under his control his army on the earth and making the water stable, looked after the kingdom given by his father. Meantime there was formerly in heaven a celestial nymph named Svarṇā. Due to Krauñca's favour a daughter named Vṛndā was born to her. The Creator fashioned the body of Vṛndā, to see the beauty along with splendour which he had made separately in one place. Svarṇā gave that young, beautiful girl Vṛndā, charming in all limbs and infatuating people, to Śukra who solicited her for (being married to) Jālandhara.

Śukra said:

45-52. O you beautiful lady, live long and be happy with the wonderful weapon of Cupid, that (hurts) the eyes of the world. Obtain him—the brave man—of large eyes, as your husband, not seeing whom the women have fixed Cupid as the man.

(Jālandhara), the son of the Ocean married Vṛndā according to the Gāndharva type of marriage. O king, the couple caused delight to the people. She gave up her fickleness. Jālandhara too, following the practice of wise men, did not long for any other woman. Once, while seated in his assembly, he saw Rāhu with his head cut off; he asked Śukra, "Why is he one whose half body (only) remains?" He told him the old account from the beginning

as to how the milky ocean was churned by the gods for (securing) nectar. Hearing it, the demon Jālandhara who was amazed, spoke (these) words: "You become favourable to Rāhu and of a handsome form." With the advice of Śukra, the valorous son of the Ocean, remembering his paternal uncle started a war with the gods, O brave one.

CHAPTER FIVE

War Between Gods and Demons

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. Who is the paternal uncle of the Ocean's son? What happened to him in the war? How did the demon fight? O Nārada, tell me that.

Nārada said:

2-5. O best king, listen. The Milky Ocean is the paternal uncle of Jālandhara. After the gods and the demons had churned from him Lakṣmī, the Moon, the elephant (called Airāvata), the horse (named Uccaiḥśravas) the gods snatched the wealth. Hearing that the demon Jālandhara fought with the gods. Once the mighty one, having instructed his messenger what to speak, sent him, Durvāraṇa (by name), to the residence of the lord of gods. Then, getting into a chariot, Durvāraṇa went to heaven. Desiring to enter the residence, he was prohibited by the door-keepers.

The massenger said:

6-11. I am Jālandhara's messenger. I have come to Indra. Please go there and respectfully inform (Indra) about me (i.e. my arrival).

Then a door-keeper, having heard his words, just then went to (Indra), the lord of Śacī. Having saluted him, he said: "O lord, a messenger from the earth has come." To him Indra said:

"Bring (in) the messenger." He, holding the hand of the messenger, brought him near Indra. Durvāraṇa entered the assembly of the gods. He saw Indra who was surrounded by thirty-three crore gods, (who was seated upon) a divine, golden throne, who was waited upon with the breezes (produced) by chowries, whose one thousand eyes resembling fully bloomed lotuses were full of the feeling of love for Śacī. Then Durvāraṇa, seeing the lord of gods along with Bṛhaspati, (and) laughing at the beauty of his eyes, saluted him.

12-20. That messenger of Jālandhara occupied the seat that was pointed out. Indra said to him: "To whom do you belong? On what mission have you come?" He said to Indra: "I am Jālandhara's envoy. He is the king of all worlds. From my mouth listen to his order: 'Why did you, by employing the Mandara mountain (as the churning rod) churn my uncle, the Milky Ocean? You took away the treasure, the great wealth like Lakṣmī, the Moon, the elephant (viz. Airāvata), the horse (called Uccaiḥśravas), gems like corals. Give (back) all that. So also, O Indra, quickly leave the heaven. By my words, quickly do everything that is proper. If you desire to live, apologise to the king." Then Indra laughed and spoke to Durvāraṇa: "O messenger, hear in brief the reason for churning the Ocean. Formerly my enemy Maināka, the son of Himālaya, was held by the foolish Ocean in his side, and the wicked Ocean also held (i.e. supported) the Fire in the form of a horse, who had burnt the mobile and the immobile. This lord is the place of refuge of the demons, the haters of Dharma. He always gives curd, ghee, milk to the demons.

21-24. O Durvāraṇa, therefore, he was churned by us; and he, with his wealth lost, was punished by the ancient gods. O messenger, listen. He was dried up by the brāhmaṇa (Agastya) born from a pitcher, due to his (i.e. Agastya's) association with me. Moreover, he is tormented due to his bad company. (If) he also, surrounded by his entire army, will come to fight with us, he will just then meet with destruction." Speaking like this, (Indra) the killer of Vṛtra, ceased (speaking). He loudly praised the messenger of the Ocean's son. (The messenger), having come (back) to the son of the Ocean, told him everything from the beginning that the lord of gods had said.

Nārada said:

25-34a. Having heard Indra's words (i.e. message) from the mouth of his messenger, the Ocean's son became angry and called his entire army. Then by (Jālandhara's) order the demons who lived in the lower world, so also those who lived on the earth came there with their armies to Jālandhara. He set out on a march. Due to the roars of the army of the Ocean's son, O king, the sky, the nether world and all the quarters burst. (Demons) fearful with faces like those of horses, elephants, camels, cats, (so also those) having faces like those of tigers, lions, rats, having eyes like the lightning, (and) some having serpent-like hair, large bodies, some with sword-like nails, and others also ran and roared with the sound (like that) of the clouds. O king, that entire army, full of chariots, elephants, horses and foot-soldiers, and fearful due to the multitudes of amusements in the war shone at that time. Having got into the aeroplane which was a hundred yojanas extensive, to which crores of swans were yoked, which had a stream of a thousand grandeurs, which was filled with all things, Jālandhara quickly went (out). On the first day, he, with his armies, reached Mandara at mid-day. It was broken (into portions) by palanquin carriers and divided by many elephants. On the second day he, along with his army, reached Meru. That great army remained on the peak (called) Ilāvṛta.

34b-40a. Then the chief demons destroyed the Khāṇḍava, Nandana forest. The best demons shattered the peaks of Meru. The best demons, after having tied the couch-like swings to the *s*antāna trees, dallied with siddha women. The river on Meru was filled with saffron on the breasts, tāmbūlas, sandal, agaru (sandal) ornaments, and flowers dropped from the hair. The eastern side of that good Meru was shaken by his elephants. The chariots moved to the south and the warriors to the north and west. Then the demon Jālandhara made the demons set out. Others also, along with the sounds of drums, went to the Mahendra peak. Having destroyed the city of the king of kings, and of Yama and Varuṇa, so also (the cities) of other regents of quarters, they came to Amarāvatī.

40b-42. Then divine portents, so also portents in the sky, the earth and the atmosphere appeared. Much dust fell (down);

mass of darkness spread (out). Then the thunderbolt, being lustreless, fell down from Indra's hand. Seeing fearful omens, Indra said to Bṛhaspati: "What should we do, and whose refuge should we seek? See, the war is imminent."

43-45. Then Bṛhaspati spoke these words to the king of heaven: "Approach the feet of Viṣṇu living in Vaikuṇṭha." Indra, thus told by Bṛhaspati, went along with the gods to (Viṣṇu's) abode—Vaikuṇṭha—and quickly sought the refuge of (Viṣṇu) the enemy of Kaiṭabha. Vijayā, the doorkeeper, informed Viṣṇu (of his arrival). All gods, trembling through fear of Jālandhara, came (there).

Śrī said:

46-49. You who are fighting for gods, should not kill him, my brother. He, O god, should only be cursed and not be killed.

Hearing these words of Lakṣmī, Viṣṇu the protector of the three worlds, mounted upon Garuḍa that covered the sky (just) by the flapping of his wings. Hari quickly moved out of his Vaikuṇṭha abode and saw the gods trembling through the fear of Jālandhara and with their lustre lost. All the gods saw Viṣṇu resembling a dense cloud, and with his four hands adorned with the Śārṅga (bow), the conch, the mace and the lotus.

50-56a. Having recited a hymn of praise in front of (Viṣṇu) Indra said: "O god, Jālandhara, the son of the lord of the rivers has devastated the heaven." Hearing these words (of Indra) and having granted safety to the residents of heaven (i.e. the gods), (Viṣṇu) the destroyer of the demons, shone along with the gods to conquer the demon. Then Indra, holding the thunderbolt and getting into the chariot brought by Mātalin, went before Viṣṇu. All the gods were on the left side. He came from the left. (Agni) to whom the oblations are dear, seated on a ram, was on the southern side. Indra's son, Jayanta, mounted upon the elephant Airāvata, and Indra mounted upon (the horse) Uccaiḥśravas, and both (remained) in front of the lord. (There were) Dhātṛ, Aryaman, Mitra, Varuṇa, Aṁśa, Bhaga, Indra, Vivasvat, Pūṣan, and the tenth was said to be Parjanya. Then Tvaṣṭṛ shone, so also Viṣṇu, the younger brother (of Indra).

56b-60. Thus these twelve Ādityas stood before Indra. Vīrabhadra, Śambhu, and the very glorious Giriśa, Ajaikapād, Ahirbudhnya, Pinākin who was (never) defeated, Bhuvanādhīśvara, Kapālin, Sthāṇu, and Bhaga, and Bhagavat, are said to be the eleven Rudras, O king, before him (also stood) the eight Maruts, viz. Śvasana, Sparśana, Vāyu, Anila, so also Māruta, Prāṇa, Apāna and Sajīva. Vivasvat also went among them with his ten forms. At that time Dhanada (i.e. Kubera), the lord of kinnaras, having got into a palanquin (also) went there.

61-67. The Rudras mounted on bulls, so also Māruta, being carried by a deer and having the weapons like tridents and iron clubs, went in front of the army. Gandharvas, cāraṇas, yakṣas, piśācas, snakes, guhyakas holding all weapons went in front of the army. The soldiers also crossed the eastern and western oceans. In it Hari, with the body (i.e. in the form) of a boar moved with a desire to kill the army of the demons, after he had speedily come from the heaven. The northern part of the Sumeru mountain was covered by the army of the gods. Having resorted quickly to the southern peak of the golden mountain, the wonderful huge army of Jālandhara remained. The battlefield remained day and night in the region of Ilāvṛta where it was arranged between Meru and Mandara (mountains). The demons, full of joy, quickly went to that region described as bringing victory by Śukra, so also the gods went to that region described (like that) by Bṛhaspati.

68-71. It was surrounded by excellant chariots, surges of elephants giving out the streams of rut resembling clouds. The land causing (the armies) move shone with innumerable horses and footsoldiers walking in front of Garuḍa. Then there was the great sound of the musical instruments of both the armies; so also the tumult of the warriors roaring at one another. Then a great war, causing fear, took place between the demons and the gods. There was the friction of the entire army like the destruction of the three worlds. Śruti (the sacred text) overpowered with fear, and much fatigued wept again and again. The battlefield was at that time filled with arrows concealing the forms of the chariots.

72-75. The Sky also, tossing the garment of dust, was horripilated. She (i.e. the Sky) was as it were crying through fear with

the loud notes of the birds. Then Indra ordered the clouds like Saṁvartaka. They, mounting upon tall elephants fought in the war. Gandharvas and kinnaras became the drivers of the horses of gods. Sādhyas and siddhas (became) chariot-fighters. Yakṣas and cāraṇas (became) elephant-riders. Serpents eating (i.e. living upon) air, so also kinnaras (became) the foot-soldiers. O king, the leader Yama (became) the chief of the diseases, viz. consumption.

76-81a. A fierce battle took place there between the demons and the diseases. The demons (struck by) diseases like acute pain and fever fell and rolled on the ground. The diseases struck by the demons dropped on the battlefield. Certain diseases fled to the mountains. There were natural herbs which rendered them free from trouble. With them the servants of Yama rendered (the soldiers) in the armies free from trouble. The groups of foot-soldiers among the demons killed all the foot-soldiers (among the army of the gods) with arrows, mallets and spears with sharp edges, sharp swords, and hatchets. Crores (of the warriors) with their bodies tawny due to blood killed one another. The quick horses threw up in the sky the horse-riders at that time. With their bodies tawny due to blood, they clung to one another, and struck one another.

81b-86. The fierce mass of the fighters from chariots covered the earth with streams of chariots. They pierced with sharp arrows discharged from the bows the great fighters from chariots. The elephants, with their temples emaciated due to rut, and being angry, knocked down the elephants after binding their trunks with their own trunks. Some demon lifting a chariot with his arms went to the sky. He knocked down on the ground the horse-riders, horses and elephants. Taking them on his shoulder he quickly went to Jālandhara. Someone, taking two elephants on his two sides, a third one on his belly and a fourth one on his head, runs (i.e. ran) on the battlefield. A demon, taking out his sword from the sheath and shaking the clear sky, went after knocking down thousands of gods on the battlefield.

87-88. A semidivine female able to fly, of stout breasts, lustful, slim-bodied, quickly came from the sky and took away a demon from the battlefield. She kissed his face fixed with sharp

arrows. Then Kālanemi, having bound the army of the gods, danced.

89-93. Then angry Viṣṇu went out to (attack) Kālanemi; Yama (went against) the hero Durvāraṇa, and Rāhu (against) the Moon and the Sun. God Vaiśvānara (went out to attack) Ketu, and Bṛhaspati went (out to fight with) Śukra. The restrained Aśvins went (out to attack) the demon Aṅgāraparṇaka. (Jayanta) Indra's son (went to attack) Saṁhrāda, and Kubera went (to attack) Nihrāda. Rudras surrounded Niśumbha and Vasus surrounded Śumbha in the war. Viśvedevas went (out to attack) Jāmbha who stood in the form of a cloud. Vāyus (went out to attack) Vajraroman, and Mṛtyu went (out to attack) Maya. Vāsava with the Śakti-missile in his hand, ran to Namuci who was distracted. The other gods also surrounded the demons matching them in valour.

CHAPTER SIX

Death of Demon Bala

Nārada said:

1-18a. When the duels in this way had commenced in many ways, the angry Viṣṇu struck Kālanemi with his mace. He, giving up his swoon (i.e. regaining consciousness) thought, and struck Viṣṇu with arrows. Then the angry Viṣṇu dropped him dead on the ground. O king, having reflected, Candramā (i.e. the Moon) struck Rāhu with a sword. Rāhu at that time leaving him ran to the Sun. Having vanquished the Sun in the battle, Rāhu ran to the Moon. The lord of the night (i.e. the Moon) struck him with a sword in the battle. Due to the hardness of the body of Rāhu the sword at that time was powdered. Rāhu struck him deeply with his hard fist. Having lifted up Candra (i.e. the Moon) he swallowed him speedily in the great war and again spat him out. He, putting his mark, the dear on his chest, dismissed him. That Rāhu, seizing (the horse) Uccaiḥśravas, took him to Jālandhara, and offered him to him (i.e. to

Jālandhara) with devotion. The angry Durvāraṇa struck Yama with a mace in the war. Saṁhrāda, pierced with sharp arrows by (Jayanta) the son of Indra seized Jayanta who fainted due to the stroke of the iron club, mounted upon Airāvata, and went to Jālandhara. Kubera also struck Nirhāda with his mace in the battle. The Rudras vigourously hit Niśumbha with the strokes of their spears. Niśumbha too very much harassed them with volleys of arrows. The demon Śumbha filled (i.e. covered) the hosts of gods with arrows. Maya, full of deceit, tied Yama with nooses, and took him (to Jālandhara). He gave him to Jālandhara, and Jayanta also to the Ocean. The Ocean too threw him into his mouth (so that) the world should be free from fear. Then Indra also, having tied Namuci with nooses, took him, the destroyer of the universe; then Jālandhara went. O king, a very fierce battle took place between Indra and Bala. The splendour from the body of Bala shone, like that of the Sun, in the ten directions. All the missiles of Indra were shattered on (striking) the body of Bala. The mighty Bala struck Indra with a mallet on his chest. Then Indra roared fiercely. Hearing that Bala laughed. From the mouth of him who was laughing, pearls dropped down. With a desire for (securing) his body, Indra did not fight.

18b-24. Then he very much praised Bala, the ocean of might. "O best among gods, ask for a boon." When told like this, Indra said to Bala: "O lord of the demons, if you are pleased, then (please) give your body to me." Hearing these words of Indra, that Bala also said: "Cutting me (i.e. my body) with weapons take me (i.e. my body)." Then he also (said): "What is that which cannot be (i.e. is not) given by the noble?" "Like speech to one who cannot hear, like a woman of fickle eyes to a blind man, like a garland of flowers to a dead man, wealth is fruitless to a miser. The noble ones do not seize their enemies though they harm. The Rivers also take their co-wives (i.e. other Rivers) to the Ocean. A good man, engaged in the welfare of the others, does not get perturbed even at the time of their destruction. The sandal tree, though cut, makes fragrant the mouth (i.e. the edge) of the axe. Even a divine body perishes, but not the wealth given to the good. That digit of the Moon alone, which is on the head of Śiva remains (intact). Those who show goodness to those

who harm them, are the good that are at the top of the earth. Even a wicked man loves them who for their own cause get their bodies cut off for those who have harmed them before." Saying, 'All right', Indra struck Bala with a mallet. Yet his hody did not split up. Indra became worried. Being reminded by Mātalin, he hit the body (of Bala) with his thunderbolt. Due to that stroke of the thunderbolt the body of Bala was shattered. A portion of Bala's body fell on thc golden mountain. Another (fell) upon the Himālaya. The third one fell upon the Go mountain. The fourth one (fell) into the divine river. The fifth one (fell) upon the Mandara (mountain). The sixth produced from the body of Vijaya fell into the mine of diamonds.

25-31. All the limbs of his body born pure, became the sources of gems due to the pure act. Particles of the bones fell from the thunderbolt. The hexagons became gems. From his eyes (dropped) sapphires. Rubies were produced from his ears, (so also) rubies were produced from his blood. Emeralds were produced from his marrow. From his tongue corals were produced. In the same way his teeth became pearls. Emeralds were produced from his marrow. So also emeralds were (also) produced from his nose. His excrement became bell-metal. His semen turned into silver. Copper was produced from his urine. From the unguent of his body brass came out, so also lustrous wealth. From his lsound lapis lzuli came out; so also more charming gems. Gold was produced from his nails. Mercury came out from his blood. Crystal was produced from his marrow. Corals were produced from his flesh. The gems were (thus) produced on the earth from the body of Bala. They are enjoyed by pure persons due to the wealth of the collection of their religious merit.

32-37. Meantime, having heard that Bala was killed in the battle by Indra, his queen named Prabhāvatī, went near (i.e. to) his (i.e. Indra's) feet. Seeing her husband with his limbs shattered in the battle, Prabhāvatī, full of tears, with her hair loose, of stout breasts, lamented: "O lord, O Bala, O you brave one, O you of a handsome body, O you dear to the world, why have you, abandoning me, gone to aloofness? Men do not cast their bodies, even on realising that they are full of old age, and leprosy; but O dear one, you have in vain cast your body; O dear one, by means of your divine body the string of pearls is adorned. O

dear one, untie the braid of me afflicted with the grief of widowhood, which you yourself, eager to fight, had tied." The Ocean's son, seeing the queen lamenting like this, and being afflicted, said to Śukra: "O Bhārgava, bring him back to life."

Śukra said:

38. He died willingly. How can I bring him back to life? Yet due to the power of the hymn he will utter words.

Jālandhara said:

39-42. O Bhārgava, I wish (to see Bala's) form (and) hear his words.

Being thus addressed by Jālandhara, he became engrossed in meditation. Then from his mouth sound pleasing the ears came out, addressing Prabhāvatī. It as it were came out from a musical instrument "O Prabhāvatī, unite your body with the parts of my body." Hearing these words of (i.e. uttered by) him, Prabhāvatī turned herself into a river. She got united with the parts of Bala's body, and flowed towards the east. Due to her water, excellent brilliance was produced in gems.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Lakṣmī Intervenes in the Fight between Viṣṇu and Jālandhara

Nārada said:

1-3a. Then Jālandhara who was angry, spoke to (Indra), the killer of the demon: "O you of a mean power, where will you go after killing Bala through trickery?" Speaking thus to Indra, that brave son of the Ocean, cut off, with arrows, his chariot along with the charioteer, horses and flag. Indra, wounded by the arrows, fell after fainting on (i.e. in) his chariot.

3b-9. Seeing that Indra had fallen down, the Ocean's son roared. Giving up his swoon (i.e. regaining consciousness), Indra discharged his thunderbolt against Jālandhara. Then holding a

piece of a mountain the Ocean's son held the thunderbolt at his side and quickly getting down his chariot, ran to Indra with a desire to seize him in the battle. Then, Indra, abandoning the chariot and remembering Viṣṇu, ran away. The arrogant son of the Ocean got into Indra's chariot, and making Mātalin the charioteer, went with his desire fulfilled. That mighty-armed Jālandhara went quickly like a cloud after getting into Indra's chariot (as he liked). Then, Viṣṇu through anger raised his sword (called) Nandaka in the battle, and inciting Garuḍa, having mind's speed, struck the army of the demons angrily. He, with force, knocked down chariots, horses, elephants and foot-soldiers in thousands.

10-12. Viṣṇu, surrounded (i.e. accompanied) by Kaśyapa's son performed a fierce feat in the battle. (The battlefield had become) a river, which carried hair, bones, marrow and stream of blood, which was resorted to by goblins, vampires and birds, which was filled with hands, thighs, shanks, missiles and weapons, which was very difficult to cross, which was resorted to by tigers and lordly elephants, which was adorned with blood, entrails, necklaces and armlets. Seeing the army which blocked the beautiful festival to the the rolling eyes, struck by Viṣṇu, all the excellent demons, obstructed Viṣṇu on all sides at the order of Jālandhara.

13-15. There those demons showered volleys of arrows, as clouds shower (water), as bees shower (i.e. moisten) a lotus, as the clouds shower a mountain (with water), or as hosts of birds shower (i.e. moisten) a mango-tree, or as a mass of incense showers (i.e. fills) the sky. In that danger of the battle, Viṣṇu was not visible, so also Garuḍa was not visible. All those great demons who had got into their chariots, roaring with fearful sounds, struck Viṣṇu with all weapons.

16-20. The angry enemy of the demons (i.e. Viṣṇu), with a fierce form, knocked down all of them in the war as wind knocks down a mass of leaves. Then the demon Śailaroman, angrily ran to Viṣṇu. Even the arrows of Viṣṇu were shattered on (i.e. after striking) his body. Śailaroman also struck with arrows the body of Viṣṇu who taking out his sword cut off his head. When the demon's head was cut off, his trunk, walking on the battlefield seized Garuḍa by his wings with his hands. His head

too quickly jumped and stuck fast to his shoulders. Then seeing the fighting of his face even Viṣṇu was amazed.

21-25a. Seeing the head stuck (to the shoulders), Garuḍa fell down on the ground. Again speedily flying, he resorted to the place of the head. Then the powerful Śailaroman snatched off Viṣṇu from Garuḍa. Viṣṇu struck him with the palm of his hand; and he fell dead on the ground. Then Jālandhara said to Khaḍgaroman, his charioteer: "Drive the chariot there, where god Viṣṇu is." By the words (i.e. the order) of Jālandhara, Khaḍgaroman took the chariot (to that spot). Seeing that Viṣṇu in front of him, the Ocean's son said: "O Viṣṇu, kill me fearlessly. I shall not kill you, O Mādhava."

25b-29. Hearing those words of him, Viṣṇu, with his eyes red due to anger, filled (i.e. covered) him with fatal arrows. The Ocean's brave son, with his body pierced by Viṣṇu, continuously covered Viṣṇu with streams (i.e. volleys) of arrows. Garuḍa, pierced by his hundreds of arrows, fell unconscious. Seeing Garuḍa fallen on the ground (after being struck) by the arrows of the Ocean's son, Viṣṇu was reminded of his chariot that stood in Vaikuṇṭha. That chariot, without a charioteer, (but) surrounded by horses, came to him. Seeing that chariot yoked with horses on the battlefield the lord was amazed.

30-34. Having brought Garuḍa to consciousness, he appointed him as its driver. That Viṣṇu, putting the crown on his head, the Kaustubha gem on his chest, and prompting the horses to exert, went up to Jālandhara. With (other) gods, he tore the earth with the chariot's wheel(s); he quickly struck the army of the demons with (his) arrows. Ordered by the lord of gods, Fire burnt the demon's army (as he was) aided by Wind. At that time, the lord, along with the gods, destroyed the army of the demons. Seeing his army of which a small portion was left, Jālandhara thought, and then (he) the king said to Śukra:

35-39. "When (even) you, well-versed in incantations, were there, the gods destroyed my army. You are well-known for your lore. O brāhmaṇa, what is the use of the lore which does not protect those who are afflicted with diseases, and what is the use of that kṣatra power which does not protect those seeking refuge?" Hearing the words of Jālandhara, Śukra said to

him: "O king, (now) see the power of me, a brāhmaṇa." Saying so, he touched them with water (i.e. sprinkled water over them, and) roused them with the 'hum' sound. They were (thus) roused by Śukra. The Ocean's son struck the gods with fatal arrows, and they fell in the battle all around. O king, with their bodies shattered by arrows, they sustained their life. They, pierced by arrows, did not die because of their immortality, O best one.

40-45a. Then god Viṣṇu said to Bṛhaspati: "O preceptor of gods, fie upon the power of you who are not bringing the gods back to life." Bṛhaspati then immediately said to the lord of the world (i.e. Viṣṇu): "O lord, by means of the herbs I shall bring the gods back to life." Speaking like this, Bṛhaspati too went to the mountain Droṇa, lying in the ocean; and comfortably taking the herbs (from the mountain), Bṛhaspati, by using them, brought the gods back to life. Then the gods who rose, killed the army of the demons. Seeing the gods to have risen, the Ocean's son (Jālandhara) said to Śukra: "O Śukra, how did they get up without your lore?" Hearing these words spoken by the demon, Śukra said to the Ocean's son:

45b-48a. "There is a great mountain named Droṇa, that lies in the ocean. There are herbs there, which bring the dead back to life. The preceptor of gods (Bṛhaspati), having gone there, and having taken the herbs (from there), rouses, with an incantation, the gods killed in the battle." Hearing what Śukra said, Jālandhara, having entrusted the responsibility of his army to Śumbha, went to the Ocean.

48b-54. Having gone into the Ocean of Milk, he entered a divine, very bright house and saw there the pleasure-chamber of the Ocean of Milk. In it neither hot nor cold breezes (blew). Darkness was not noticed there. There excellent females, rich with the burden of breasts, having slim bellies and good teeth, sang, danced and sported. The sportive females served there by casting amorous glances, moving to and fro, with fascinating bodies, by means of lovely movements of their creeper-like arms, and the sounds of their steps, with sweet words and eulogies, by giving the pleasure of fragrance, with the hummings of the bees in the form of their eyes, by sportively moving the chowries, with garlands, and smiling glances. Having gone there

the Ocean's son who was eager to fight and seeing the Ocean of Milk sporting there, saluted the Ocean of Milk, and said to him: "O uncle, you are killing me. With the water inundate (Bṛhaspati) under the pretext of the herbs from the Droṇa mountain."

The Ocean of Milk said:

55-61. O son, how shall I inundate with my waves him who has sought my refuge? The best sages do not praise him who abandons him who has sought his refuge.

Hearing the words of his paternal uncle, the king of the demons continuously, angrily, struk the (Droṇa) mountain with the soles of his feet. Then, O king, mountain Droṇa who was very much afraid of Jālandhara, came, in his (original) form to Jālandhara, and said to him: "I have become your servant. Protect me who have sought your refuge. O you of great arms, by your order I shall (even) go to lower region. I shall stay (there) till you rule the kingdom." Accompanied by the cry of the herbs and the weeping of the siddhas, the (Droṇa) mountain went to the lower region, (even) when the Ocean's son was observing. Then the hero Jālandhara came to the great battle-field. Having got into the chariot already made ready, he went to Viṣṇu. The son of the River (i.e. Jālandhara) seeing Viṣṇu seated in the chariot, laughed loudly. (He said to him:)

62-69. "Wait in your chariot till I kill (other) enemies." Speaking like this, he quickly struck the army of gods. The gods rent by (his) arrows, said to Bṛhaspati: "Protect (us)." Then Bṛhaspati quickly went to the Ocean of Milk. O king, not seeing (the mountain) Droṇa (there) he became very anxious. Then Bṛhaspati, having quickly come (back) to the battlefield, said to the gods: "O gods, all of you run away. The Droṇa mountain has perished." Of Bṛhaspati who was speaking like this, the Ocean's son, laughing at the gods, cut off the sacred thread and hair with sharp arrows. Then Bṛhaspati afflicted through fear to his life speedily ran away. O king, all gods (also) leaving the battlefield, fled. Having thus made the gods flee, he ran to Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu also, eager to fight, ran to the lord of demons.

Then a fierce battle took place between Viṣṇu and Jālandhara. Dreadful by means of his volleys of arrows he overcame Viṣṇu.

70-74. Cutting to pieces those arrows and filling (i.e. covering) him with arrows, mighty Viṣṇu, harassed the demon Jālandhara with arrows. Jālandhara, with his body injured by the arrows, abandoned his chariot, and quickly ran to Viṣṇu standing in the battle to vanquish him. Seeing him coming, Viṣṇu pierced him with arrows. He bore the arrows of Viṣṇu on his body and came near his chariot. Whirling repeatedly Garuḍa with one hand and Viṣṇu's chariot with the other (hand), he dropped them on the Śveta-dvīpa. Garuḍa, thrown from Jālandhara's hand, also fell down. For a long time he took rest in Krauñca-dvīpa only. Viṣṇu, freeing himself from the whirling chariot, came to the battlefield, and said to the lord of demons: "Wait, wait."

75-78. The Ocean's son who liked fighting, seeing Viṣṇu who had again come to the battlefield, covered the ground with arrows and roared. Viṣṇu quickly pierced the demon on his chest with a (missile called) śakti that was throbbing. He (then) fell down. His son (then) took him from the battlefield to his residence, and said to him: "Oh, who has made me void of shame?" Then a great fight between (Viṣṇu) the enemy of the demons and Jālandhara, standing on the ground, took place there. Viṣṇu did not kill the demon out of his love for Lakṣmī; (but) himself fell down (struck) by his arrows.

79-83. Then seeing Viṣṇu fallen on the ground, the Ocean's son, took him and got into his own chariot. Then Lakṣmī, dear to Viṣṇu, came weeping to him. Lakṣmī stood there. Seeing her husband, having eyes like lotuses, fallen, Lakṣmī said to the Ocean's son: "O brother, listen to (my) words. You have vanquished and held Viṣṇu. O you of great power, it is not proper for you to bestow widowhood on your sister." Hearing her words, he released the lord of the world (i.e. Viṣṇu). (Then) Jālandhara, of mighty arms, devoutly saluted his sister (i.e. Lakṣmī). Then he quickly saluted Viṣṇu's feet through his love for his sister. Viṣṇu said to Jālandhara: "I am pleased with your act. O lord of demons, ask for a boon. Which boon shall I grant to you?"

Jālandhara said:

84-86. O Viṣṇu, if you are pleased with this (act of) valour of me, then you should stay with Lakṣmī, at my father's abode.

Saying, 'All right', the lord of the earth, remembered (i.e. thought of) Garuḍa (and on his arrival) mounted upon him and (went) to the Ocean of Milk with his wife (Lakṣmī). Since then Kṛṣṇa (i.e. Viṣṇu) lives in his father-in-law's house. The lord of the gods desiring to do what is dear to Lakṣmī, lives in the ocean.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conditions During Jālandhara's Rule

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. O Nārada, tell me what Jālandhara, the Ocean's son, did after having made the gods flee in the battle, and after having put Viṣṇu in his own abode.

Nārada said:

2-8a. Having given gifts due to being pleased to the heroes like Śumbha, Jālandhara went to heaven, and having reached it saw that the trees constantly bore fruits by decorating men everyday with the shower of gold. It is the fruit of the horse-sacrifice. Those noble ones who give an elephant, a garment, gold, a cow, a girl (in marriage), sesamum-seeds, flowers, camphor, tāmbūla, musk and saffron, see Amarāvatī. (They see Amarāvatī) by giving a house (i.e. a shelter) in the rainy season, fire (i.e. warmth) in the cold season. They play upon all the musical instruments in Śiva's temple. Those who put up stalls where water is distributed to travellers in Caitra (see Amarāvatī). In that city the swings with couches swing on their own. There sārikās, parrots, swans, wandering bees and cuckoos act as messengers and bring about the union with the dear.

8b-12. There are, O Rāma, (the celestial nymphs like) Rambhā, Menakā, Tilottamā, Suṣamā, Sundarī, Ghṛtācī, Pañjikasthalī, Sukeśī, Sumukhī, Rāmā, Mañjughoṣā and Mālinī; (so also) Mṛgodbhavā, Sukhadā, Dhanadaṁṣṭrā, Tilaprabhā, that cause (men) to receive the fruits of the Aśvamedha sacrifices, and give the fruits of the Rājasūya sacrifices. The celestial nymphs that were sinless, sported there in crores. The son of the Ocean established the demon Śumbha, (dear to him) like his own life in the heaven like this. Having come (back) from the heaven, and having consecrated Niśumbha as the heir-apparent, Jālandhara, due to his own might ruled for a couple of arbuda years (i.e. for two hundred million years).

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

13-14. He fought with the gods in the battle with them. He was not defeated by the gods. What did the brave son of the Ocean do after that? Tell all that in detail to me who desire to listen to it.

Nārada said:

15-17. O king, listen properly to what the Ocean's son did: Having conquered the gods in the battle, he ruled without any trouble. Gandharvas like Citrasena waited upon the lord of the demons. The lord of the demons also enjoyed the shares in the sacrificial offerings. The mighty one snatched away all the wealth and also other (objects) after having vanquished (the gods).

18-26. O king, when the Ocean's son was ruling over the earth, no human being died, and nobody would go to hell. There was no other waste than (in) enjoyment. There was no unfortunate barren woman. There no ugly, distressed, wicked or notorious woman was seen. There was no widow, nor was there a poor man. Everywhere there were donors and no recipients. Meritorious persons gave their wealth to brāhmaṇas. In every house the women were endowed with beauty and youth. There were cow's milk, curd, and ghee. Men there were without old age. All were happy, there was nowhere bondage by means of fetters. Killing was not done by an arrow. Nobody harassed anybody else. Debt was not seen (to be incurred); O king, everywhere there were rich people. O king, the subjects were contented, and rich with all crops. In the

houses of men there was the milky juice which was taken out from plantains and sugarcanes and which was very sweet. A man listened to the beneficial words of a woman and a man. There was no one who robbed (people) passing along the way. The streams fall continuously from the sky, so they get mixed with Karmāra(?) ghee and with sugar and are heard to have fallen into the people's mouths just by recollecting the Ocean's son.

CHAPTER NINE

The Creation of a New Powerful Weapon by Śiva

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. O best brāhmaṇa, what did Indra and other gods, vanquished by Jālandnara, do then, when the kingdom of the heaven was snatched (by him)?

Nārada said:

2-7. The gods, having abandoned heaven, met with a bad condition. They (had) neither ambrosia, nor (the portions in the offerings made at) sacrifices. They went to the place of the Self-born (Brahmā). In Brahmā's house they saw Brahmā, Parameṣṭhin, who had engaged his mind through suspension of his breath in the Supreme Soul. All the careful gods praised him with true words. Then the lord who was pleased, said: "What should I do?" Then the gods again told Brahmā, all (the acts) of Jālandhara, and (about) their own defeat. Thinking for a moment, Brahmā along with the gods went to Kailāsa. They, full of surprise, remained by the side of Kailāsa; and the gods, led by Brahmā and Indra praised (Śiva): "Salutation to you, Bhava, Śarva, Nīlagrīva. Salutation to you, Sthūla, Sūkṣma, Bahurūpa (having many forms)."

8-11a. Śiva, turning his face to all sides, and having heard (these) words, said to Nandin: "Quickly bring the gods (here)." Hearing the words of Śiva, Nandin quickly called the gods. The

gods having entered the inner apartment, with their eyes full of wonder, saw there, seated on a seat, Śiva who conferred happiness on the world, who was waited upon by crores of devout attendants who were greyish due to dust.

11b-15a. Having first, along with the gods, saluted him, the grandsire (i.e. Brahmā) said: "Since this Indra had a malady he has foolishly come here. O great god, to whom those who seek his refuge, are dear, favour (us)." Then having heard the loud laughter of the Trident-holder (i.e. Śiva), Brahmā said to the lord of gods: "See the condition of the residents of heaven." Then the lord of all, the highest god (Śiva) having known the desire of Brahmā's (i.e. in Brahmā's) mind, and having known Indra's insult for the sake of gods, and being affectionately requested by Pārvatī, spoke (these) words, O king:

15b-18. "How can I kill that enemy who is not killed by Viṣṇu? O grandsire, the weapons like the thunderbolt have been fashioned in olden times. That demon Jālandhara would not at all be killed with those weapons. Even I cannot kill him with weapons fashioned in olden times. Let gods fashion a weapon bearing my energy and strong." Having heard this reply of Śiva, Brahmā said to him: "You (please) fashion the great weapon. You know your own power."

19-23. Hearing these words of him, Śiva spoke to him: "O Brahman, with gods you discharge your lustre united with wrath." Then Brahmā, the teacher of the Brahmāstra (Brahmā's missile), discharged (his) lustre. Then Rudra (i.e. Śiva) himself discharged the lustre produced in his three eyes. All gods also angrily discharged a mass of lustres. In the meantime, Viṣṇu who was remembered by Śiva, came (there). Śiva, who was addressed by him, 'What should I do?' spoke to Viṣṇu: "O Viṣṇu, why was Jālandhara not killed by you in the war? How is it that leaving the gods you have gone to the Ocean of Milk, for lying there?"

Śrī Viṣṇu said:

24-25. O lord of gods, if I kill him, how (can I say) Lakṣmī is dear to me? Therefore, O you, husband of Pārvatī, you (should) kill Jālandhara in a battle.

Viṣṇu who was told by Śiva, 'Discharge your lustre due to anger', discharged the lustre of Viṣṇu (i.e. his own lustre) and all that increased. Seeing the lustre to have increased and to have become extensive, (Śiva) spoke to Viṣṇu:

Śiva said:

26-29. Please fashion my missile with this lustre.

Hearing those words of Śiva, Viśvakarman and others, looking at one another, thought: 'What should we do?' Seeing them to be silent, and knowing what was in their mind, Brahmā said: "The deities cannot bear your lustre which they are unable to look at. Who can curb your lustre?" Then jumping over the lustre, lord Śiva danced by roving in all directions with the hinder part of his left foot.

30-38. Then gods like Indra and others, seeing Śiva dancing over the lustre, joyfully sounded musical instruments. Since then, in dances roving in all directions is practised. Then due to the crushing caused by Śiva's dance, a disc was produced, which had three lakhs of spokes, and which was full of a crore of bones. Due to being crushed by the foot of Śiva, particles went out from the lustre. And with that Viśvakarman fashioned a missile and aeroplanes. O king, the ageless gods, seeing that Sudarśana disc, said, through fear, to the lord of gods: "Protect us, protect us." The earth received hardness due to the bright metals. The sheath that was fashioned by Viśvakarman was reduced to ash. With that weapon which was fashioned, Kāla, being burnt, fell on the ground. Then Śiva gave that disc into Brahmā's hand. The lord of Umā, Śiva, seeing that the beard (of Brahmā) was burnt by the masses of lustre from the disc, laughed, and quickly taking it (back) from Brahmā's hand, kept it under his arm-pit, as a poor man keeps a treasure. Then, the disc, remaining under the arm-pit of Śiva was not seen, as the fruit of the gift which is given by a great fool.

CHAPTER TEN

Jālandhara's Messenger Rāhu Meeṭs Śiva

Nārada said:

1. After this, having gone to the Ocean's son, I told him: "O best among all heroes, Śiva has made a vow to kill you."

Jālandhara said:

2. O great sage, is there a collection of gems in the house of the Trident-holder? Tell me all about that. No war takes place without a desire (to get something).

Nārada said:

3-7. Ash is (applied) to his body; his bull (i.e. his vehicle) is old; there are serpents on his body; there is poison in his throat; in his hand there is a begging bowl. Gajānana and Ṣaḍānana (i.e. Kārtikeya) are his two sons. Such is his wealth. What is different (from this) you should know from me: (His wife is) the daughter of the lord of mountains. She is noble and has raised breasts. The lord, though he has burnt Cupid, is fascinated by her beauty. Maheśa (i.e. Śiva) has always a desire to amuse her. Śiva dances and sings and (thus) causes her to laugh. She is well-known as Pārvatī. She is the divine limit of beauty. O king, beautiful Vṛndā and these celestial nymphs do not have (i.e. are not equal to) even a sixteenth part of Pārvatī.

8-11. Speaking like this to the intolerant Jālandhara, I disappeared in a moment when all the demons were watching. Then that son of the Ocean sent Rāhu as his messenger. Reaching Kailāsa in a moment, he saw the abode of the god. In the meanwhile, Viṣṇu, taking leave of the fierce Śiva, went unnoticed and quickly to the Ocean of Milk for fear of (being charged with) treachery. Rāhu saw the extremely bright abode of Śiva. Looking at (i.e. thinking to) himself he, being very much amazed, said (to himself): 'What is this?'

12-13. Desiring to enter, he was stopped at the door by the doorkeepers. When, though prohibited, he tried (to enter) they

raised their weapons. Having turned away those attendants (of Śiva), Nandin said to Rāhu: "O you low fellow, who are you? Why have you come here? What is your mission? Tell (about) your mission, so that these fearful attendants would not kill you."

Rāhu said:

14-17. I am Jālandhara's messenger. You take me to Śiva. O doorkeeper, the object of the great king (Jālandhara) is not to be told to the intermediaries.

Having heard the words of the messenger, Nandin came to Nīlalohita (i.e. Śiva). Having saluted Śaṅkara (after prostrating himself) like a staff, and standing before him, he said to him: "O great king, the son of Siṁhikā (i.e. Rāhu) is standing at the door with some mission. You may order whether he should go or come (to you)." The great god (i.e. Śiva) having heard the words of Nandin, quickly dismissed from the inner chamber, Pārvatī who had slept there and who was surrounded by her friends.

18-22. Then he said to his doorkeeper: "O Nandin, show in the messenger." Then, holding the messenger by his hand, the very mighty Nandin brought him (in and) showed him Śiva (seated) in the midst of gods. Then Rāhu saw Śiva who had put on the sacred thread of a serpent, who was without goddess (Pārvatī), who was adorned with a crescent moon on his head, who was served by the group of serpents giving out breath (i.e. hissing), who was accompanied by all gods, (and) who was waited upon by crores of attendants. Knowing that the messenger had come, Śiva looked and said: "Speak (out)." Then Rāhu commenced speaking.

Rāhu said:

23-30. O lord, I have been sent by Jālandhara to you. O Śiva, having heard his words (i.e. his message) through my mouth, do quickly (what he tells you). O Giriśa (i.e. Śiva), you are practising penance. You are qualityless. You are without religious merit. You have neither a father nor a mother. You are without wealth or a family. This mighty-armed Jālandhara

enjoys the three worlds. You too are under his control. Therefore, do as (you are) told. How is it that you who are the ancient god, are lustful and ride a bull?

When he was speaking like this, the two sons (of Śiva) Kārtikeya and Gajānana came (there). At that time, the god of gods was massaging his body with his hands. Due to his hands being tossed about, Vāsuki fell on the ground. Then the serpent (i.e. Vāsuki) seized the tail of the mouse, the vehicle of Gajānana. Seeing his vehicle seized, he said: "Leave it, leave it." In the meanwhile, seeing the agitated vehicle, of a large note, of Skanda, Vāsuki ejected, through his fear, the tail of the mouse, which he had seized; and then mounting upon Śiva's body, he encircled his neck and remained there.

31-35. Due to its heat, the crescent moon remained in the forest of his matted hair. She (i.e. the crescent moon) then became wet, and bathed his body (with) ambrosia; the row of the skulls on Śiva's head was brought back to life. (And) it recited all the sacred texts in due order, which it had formerly studied. The heads, hearing recital (of the sacred text) done by one another, discussed it (i.e. started its discussion). "I am the first, I am before (you). I am the greatest, I am the creator. I am the protector." In this way they eagerly bewailed one another: "I did not give gifts; I did not enjoy (pleasures); I did not offer oblations into fire. Due to my mind seized with grief, I did not give wealth to a brāhmaṇa."

36-38. Then a great attendant of the lord, with a mass of twisted hair, appeared (there). He had three faces, three eyes, three tails and seven hands. He was the great (attendant) by name Kīrtimukha, having matted hair. Seeing him that row of the skulls remained as it were dead through fear. Then that attendant Kīrtimukha said in front of the lord Śiva, after saluting him: "O lord, I am very much hungry." Then Śaṅkara told him: "O, eat those who are killed in the battle."

39-43. That attendant thought for a moment; and not seeing the battle anywhere, went to eat Brahmā, but was warded off by Śiva. Then Kīrtimukha who was hungry and who was fully warded off, ate up all his own body. Seeing that rash act and the devotion of Kīrtimukha, the lord, being pleased, said to

him: "Always stay in my palace. He who, living in my house, has no thought about you, will quickly fall down." He who was addressed thus, vanished. At that time gods showered flowers on the head of Śiva.

44-51. Seeing such a wonder in the assembly of the Trident-holder (i.e. Śiva) Rāhu too, being amazed, again spoke to the lord of gods: "How do passions touch you who are restrained and a meditating saint? How are you honoured by the sense-organs? How are you reached by the objects of senses? You fully accept the worship of (i.e. offered by) the regents of the quarters like Brahmā etc. (But) you do not look (up) to any god; you do not worship any god. You are the lord; (then) how do you live in the world eating whatever is obtained by begging? O lord of the meditating saints, you are protecting beautiful Pārvatī. Give her to me. Now, along with your sons Kārtikeya and Gajānana, you, taking a begging bowl, go from house to house every day." In this way Rāhu spoke (words of) various types to the lord. The lord too, hearing them, did not give any reply. Leaving the lord who was silent, Rāhu said to Nandin: "You who have a hideous, round face are the minister and the general of the army (of Śiva). You deserve to (i.e. you should) teach him who has thus deviated from right conduct. Otherwise, due to (this) sin he will, struck in the battle, fall like Indra."

52-53. Hearing these words of him, Nandin respectfully spoke to the lord, and then understanding the view of the Trident-holder (i.e. Śiva) from the sign (of the knitting) of his eyebrows Nandin, the chief among the attendants (of Śiva) honoured Rāhu, and sent him (back). Then having gone to Jālandhara, Rāhu told his (i.e. Śiva's) account and (about) the charming form of Pārvatī.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Śiva's Attendants Fight the Demons Off

Nārada said:

1-4a. Then valorous Jālandhara, having heard the words of his messenger, called his entire army, and made a march (against Śiva). Then the sound of the armies that had gathered (there) was heard. It awakened the kinnaras resting, along with their wives, in the caves of Mandara. It made rise the elephants having echoes in the caves of Meru and Mandara. The flocks of lions lost their way ahead. Thus the din of the great army deafened the three worlds. Then, O king, in the seat of Jālandhara there was the sound of drums. Due to that great sound, dear to the brave, the high mountains trembled and the palaces shook.

4b-8a. From the interior of the seven oceans the daityas and dānavas (i.e. the demons) moved out. They being ready and endowed with various vehicles roared. The neighings of the horses and great sounds were (heard) outside and in front. The earth (as it were) pleased with the wheels (of the chariot) moved. With the herds of elephants that were driven the earth along with the forest was blocked up by the myriads of fierce (warriors) urged on by Jālandhara and remaining in the chariots. There were two thousand hundred millions of horses and one hundred millions of elephants. An army consisting of one lakh chariot-warriors shone (there) and ninety crore parārdhas of chief leaders were seen.

8b-13a. The huge army, covering the sun with umbrellas moved out. At places the lotus-ponds were yellowish like gold. At places blue lotuses appeared due to the peacocks' keeping off the sun. At places the clouds appeared to rise due to the masses of dust when he marched. At places due to the cloths of the banners the sky was full of banners and umbrellas; the quarters were full of chowries when the army of the demons moved on. Then the demon Jālandhara was eager to march. Putting the (missile called) Śakti, decorated with many gems, he came to great Viṣṇu, living in the Ocean, to inquire (i.e. to take his leave). Having saluted Viṣṇu, Jālandhara said these words: "O my sister's husband, what should I give you for enjoyment? Tell me (that)"

13b-16a. Hearing these words of Oceans's son, Viṣṇu, being delighted, said: "What should I do as desired by and dear to the Ocean's son?" Thus addressed, he, being delighted, quickly replied to Viṣṇu: "I am going to the battlefield. You live here happily in the Ocean." There he was given sacred grains by Lakṣmī, and was honoured by Viṣṇu. Moving out from Viṣṇu's place, he came to the Ocean to inquire (i.e. to take his leave).

16b-22. Having saluted the Ocean, he said: "O father, I am going away to conquer Śiva in the battle. Please allow me." Hearing the words of his son who was going to (march against) Śiva, the lord of oceans also said to him: "O son, leave that ascetic (alone). Enjoy the kingdom given by me, and leave the ascetic away. Your valour is very wonderful; there is no king like you. You have made the earth superior to heaven. The earth shines in your kingdom as in Vaikuṇṭha. The god, unconquerable by demons, whom you have brought (lives here) with Lakṣmī. O child, live by me. Leave alone that mendicant, Śiva." (Though) told like this by the Ocean, he (i.e. Jālandhara), having attachment for Pārvatī, disregarded his father's words, and came to his own soldiers. Vṛndā spoke to Jālandhara who was ready to fight.

Vṛndā said:

23-28. O lord of kings, you should not fight with the condemned meditating saint. Turning away your mind going to Pārvatī, look at (i.e. think of) her. Why do you long for Pārvatī? Is Pārvatī superior to me? The poor one is without any support. She is always attached to Śiva. She longs for a son. She is barren. So she is a doll. In vain was she praised by Nārada. Give up (thoughts about) her, and enjoy me."

Hearing these words of Vṛndā, the Ocean's son (i.e. Jālandhara) replied: "Without seeing Pārvatī's beauty my mind will not turn back. O Vṛndā, you look after the country and the capital. O angry woman, you should always remember me, if Śiva kills me." Hearing these words of her husband, Vṛndā, laughing, went, after getting into a palanquin, to the seat of Jālandhara.

Nārada said:

29-40. Then the very mighty son of the Ocean proceeded to

Kailāsa. He was surrounded by sixty thousand mahāpadma soldiers. In the meanwhile, Śiva, leaving Kailāsa, went, along with his attendants, his sons and his dear wife, to (that part of) Kailāsa to the north of the Mānasa (lake). Then on the first day Jālandhara reached Kailāsa. Setting his army there, he was eager to see Kailāsa. There the breezes to which the masses of the divi ne filaments and the pollen of mandāra (flowers) had resorted, and which were broken by the showers of the sprays of cold drops, blew. Charming breezes, high like the stout breasts of the siddha women, and rich with the honey of mandāra, blew there. Seeing there the planting of their feet by ladies bright and glossy like the aśoka(-flowers), the lord of the demons became full of the sexual desire. The gods there delighted at seeing their own reflections were pleased. There, the mandāra (trees) with their sprouts withered, shone everywhere, after having manifested the coitus of the kinnara lovers. There the groves of many trees were occupied by the attendants of Śambhu. They appeared to be as it were well sustained by king Cupid. There the swarms of bees intoxicated by the fragrance of sandal and musk appeared like the charcoals of the burnt Cupid, that were put out. There, I think, having seen the entire beauty of the charming ladies, the friend of (i.e. resembling) excellent beauty, musk gave up the amusement of its mind, and plunged into blackness. At places there were lotuses shining like excellent red chalk. At places there were buds moving from their stems resembling the cloveshoot. At places there were bracelets shining like rafts on the mountain-streams. At places there were bees bowing through the humility of the nicula (a kind of reed) blossoms. At places there were fresh mango blossoms, burst and affected by cuckoos. At places there were the strong roots of the śāli rice, resorted to by herds of deer. At places there were groves sanctified by the extremely beautiful young married divine ladies, which caused a change even in the minds of sages.

41-45. On seeing the abode of Śiva, having these qualities, and the beautiful Kailāsa, the abode of all gems, the demon who was extremely amazed, said to Śukra (the son of Bhṛgu): "O dear one, why do (people) like you call him a sage whose wife is (so beautiful) like that and whose house is so charming?" Not seeing Śiva there, he asked (Śukra): "O Śukra, where has Śiva

gone? How is it that he has gone due to my fear? (i.e. has he gone through my fear)?" Thus asked, Śukra said: "The great god, lord Śiva, has gone to that (part of the) great mountain to the north of Mānasa. Others cannot go there." Hearing these words of Śukra, the very mighty demon said:

Jālandhara said:

46-49. I shall go to the lord of gods. You go first, O Śukra.

Saying so he went where Śiva himself remained. The son of the Ocean saw that excellent (part of) the mountain to the north of the Mānasa (lake). Its height was sixty thousand yojanas. That (part of) the mountain called Mānasa was, O king, surrounded by the army of the demon (Jālandhara). Many lordly demons quickly went up the mountain. There was, all round, darkness due to the umbrellas. There was a tremor due to the sound of the musical instruments. The din of their army filled the heaven and the earth.

Nārada said:

50-60. Seeing the huge army that came there, the lord kept Pārvatī, surrounded by her friends, on a very high peak of the mountain. Lord Śiva was surrounded by all his attendants who were ready (to fight) and were maddened by the fighting (spirit), so also by pramathas (i.e. the goblins attending upon Śiva) numbering thirty thousand mahābjas. Śiva said to Nandin, the chief of the attendants: "You should kill the brave, great demon Jālandhara, in the battle. Being surrounded by brave (warriors) like Mahākāla and others you go (to the battlefield). In the battle, you should fight very bravely as long as my enemy is not conquered, O hero." Hearing these words of Śiva, he said to his charioteer: "O very intelligent Kākatuṇḍa, bring my chariot today (i.e. now)." Hearing the words of Nandin, he too brought the chariot. That chariot used in battles, to which thirty-two horses were yoked, which had sixteen wheels, which had sixty flags, which was thirty yojanas long, which was full of all weapons, came (there). Śiva ordered his two sons, Kārtikeya and Gajānana to protect Nandin's troops. They were ready with their vehicles. Nandin was surrounded by the attendants. Nandin,

having honoured the lord with words, got into his chariot, and went out to (fight with) the demons. On his head shone an umbrella (of the measure) of twelve yojanas. When that Nandin went out, the demons first climbed up the mountain. The fierce-looking demons, fell on the ground.

61-68. The demons, being struck by the attendants left the mountain (and went) far away. Then coming down like smoke from the mountain the attendants struck the very powerful demons with sharp weapons. Seeing the (mountain) filled with the divinities, the demon-soldiers blocked it up. Then a great war of the attendants took place with the demons. A fierce shower of arrows was (sent by) the demons and gods. Then, the very mighty Kākatuṇḍa and others, with fire-like faces, killed all the elephants in the battle, so also (they destroyed) chariots and (killed) horses and footsoldiers. With the loudly laughing and fearful heads of the hosts of very deceitful demons killed (in the battle), the sky was filled. So also with lions, with hair let loose, having tawny faces, fierce fangs and eyes, and cutting off trunks, shanks, thighs, waists and backs. Everywhere the earth was filled with trunks tawny due to blood. Then, a very great noise was made by the lordly demons who were running in chariots, and whose soldiers were knocked down, like that of the oceans roaring at the time of the end of a yuga (i.e. the end of the world).

CHAPTER TWELVE

Śiva Arrives on the Battlefield

Nārada said:

1-6a. Seeing the demon-army killed by the attendants led by Nandin, the demons Śumbha and others, getting angry, went to (fight with) the attendants (of Śiva). Then the great demon Śumbha fought with Nandin. Niśumbha (fought with) Mahākāla, and Kāla with Lokeśvara in the battle. Śailaroman fought with

Puṣpudanta, and Mahābala with Mālyavat. Due to the power of illusion, O king, there was a din on the battlefield. Bhayānaka ran to Caṇḍa, and Rāhu to Skanda (i.e. Kārtikeya). Sarparoman (ran) to Kūṣmāṇḍa, and Gharghara to Madana. Ketumukha went to kill Śubha, and Jambha (went to kill) Vināyaka. Pātāla-ketu (rushed to kill) Hāsa, and Romakaṇṭaka (rushed to kill) Bhṛṅgīśa. The attendants of Rudra and the demons in crores fought with one another.

6b-19a When the lords of both of them were watching, the attendants and the demons, striking hard, struck (one another) with arrows. Nandin discharged those arrows as a great shower would (fall) on a mountain. Then he filled the face of Śumbha with arrows as wind fills the cave of Mandara with the masses of leaves. Kumbha left his bow, and ran to him (getting down) from the chariot. He uprooted a mountain and struck with it on the chest of Nandin, and having crushed his chariot in the battle, that mountain fell on the ground as a mountain would fall on coming in contact with the thunderbolt. He fainted for a moment, (then) regaining consciousness, he ran speedily. Mahā-kāla was struck on the chest by Niśumbha with a mallet. Coming (to him) he struck the demon on his crown with a mace. Ignor-ing that stroke, that very mighty Niśumbha also seized him by his feet and the very mighty one whirling him from his palm, threw him and roared. Drinking (i.e. inhaling) the air from his mouth (i.e. his breath), he, who had been tawny due to blood, roared. Puṣpadanta was struck on his face with a fist by Śailaro-man. He (i.e. Puṣpadanta) struck Śailaroman with a mace, and knocked him on the ground. Seeing him fallen on the ground, the very strong Giriketu struck with a mallet the very fierce Puṣpadanta. Then Puṣpadanta cut off Giriketu's head with a sword and ran taking with him the shield and the sword of Giriketu. (Giriketu's) head said to him, "Why do you go away, leaving me who desire to fight (with you)? Do you not feel ashamed of running when this body is deprived of the head?" Thus address-ed by his head, the trunk of Giriketu seized Puṣpadanta by his feet, and cut (i.e. pierced) his belly with a sharp sword.

19b-29a. From the side a demon, very strong and having a hundred heads, went out. He had two hundred eyes and two hundred arms. His head, whirling round, came near his

trunk, O king. Seeing the head come, Puṣpadanta cut it off with his sword. Then (came) a demon named Bhūkampana, and a fearful demon by name Jvara. Then, O king, Puṣpadanta was crushed there by the two. That unbearable and very speedy Jvara troubled him. The attendant of Śiva (viz. Puṣpadanta) left the battle and trembling went to the mountain (Kailāsa). A great archer Kolāhala struck Mālyavat with three arrows on his shoulders, and Mālyavat (struck) the demon on his forehead. Kolāhala who was struck by Mālyavat with sharp weapons of various kinds, showing his dexterity, struck Mālyavat. That Mālyavat, the chief among the attendants, ignoring the pain caused by the weapon, took a huge rock and struck Kolāhala with it in the battle. From him Feverish Heat, named Jvalana came out. He was very fierce, had three heads, nine hands, nine feet, and was very tawny. That Feverish Heat deluded Mālyavat with his lustre. Mālyavat, being subdued, left the battle and went to the mountain. In the battle Caṇḍi was struck with a strong noose on his chest. His horse went out (of the battlefield); from him he was hurled into the ocean.

29b-38a. In the battle Kārtikeya hit Rāhu with sharp arrows. Having covered him with volleys of arrows, he quickly discharged (the missile called) Śakti. Seeing the Śakti, burning as it were with lustre, coming to him, Rāhu flew into the sky and quickly seized it with both his hands. Seizing that Śakti, and roaring loudly, Rāhu struck him (i.e. Kārtikeya) with that same Śakti. Struck with that Śakti on his chest, a river went out of his body. In that battle, the son of Mahādeva (i.e. Kārtikeya) was washed by it. Somehow the river was checked; but a flood similarly went to the river. The Ocean's son, having heard from Jvara, the harsh cries of the mass of the (enemy's) army, did not remember even that melodious skilful note of the male cuckoo. Barbara killed with a sword Dahana (i.e. Agni) who was covering him with arrows. Sarparoman struck Kūṣmāṇḍa on his head with a fist. Pātālaketu struck Hāsa with a mallet. Taking it out from his body, the elephant bent the mallet. Pātālaketu hit him on his trunk with the stroke of his fist. Romakaṇṭaka wounded the lordly Bhṛṅgin with his weapons. The lordly Bhṛṅgin also being frightened, quickly went to the mountain from the battlefield.

38b-45. The white Dhūmravarṇa suddenly fell into the mouth of Ketu. The demon, of a large body and a large mouth, swallowed the attendant. When he was swallowed in the battle by Ketu, there was a very loud wailing. With the sharp arrows of Jṛbha, the body of Vināyaka was pierced. He cut off the trunk of that Gajānana. Then the mouse (the vehicle of Gajānana) also pierced with arrows entered a cave. In the battle Vināyaka afflicted with the stroke lamented, and was agitated. (He lamented:) "O mother, O father, O brother, O mouse dear to me." Hearing the cry of Gaṇeśa, the revered Pārvatī, coming (to Śiva) from another peak, said to Śiva at that time: "Gajānana is being killed by the demons. Kārtikeya also is knocked down. O Śiva, why are you sporting on the mountain. Protect your two sons and the attendants also. Today is the moment (i.e. the opportunity to use) the weapons like the trident always held by you." Then hearing the words of Pārvatī, Śiva said to Vīrabhadra: "Quickly make ready ready my bull (i.e. Nandin)."

46-52. When this was said, he did (like that) at that time. He fastened a diadem to his horns, which was lustrous like the sun. Having fastened a hundred bells round his neck, he put two mirrors on his ears. On his shoulders a mass of bells (was placed), and large anklets (were tied) to his feet. A thousand chowries were tied round his tail, and into his mouth (were placed) eight nooses. Then that auspicious goddess Ambikā, with the eight nooses and holding a sword, sat there (i.e. on the back of the bull) near Śiva. All the weapons were put (there, on his back). The bull was ready. With the string of her own bells, Pārvatī adorned him. The goddess also put a mark (on his face) and spoke to him after honouring him: "O best among the bulls, you should never leave Śiva in the dangerous battle. You should come (back) with Śiva after having vanquished the enemies in the battle." Hearing these words of the goddess, Śiva, adorned with his own ornaments, holding a thousand weapons, mounted upon his bull. With respect he spoke to that Pārvatī: "I am going to the battlefield."

The lord said:

53-57. With a desire for your own forms, you can remain even alone; for the demons, having a bad intention about ladies,

have come. Therefore, O beautiful lady, you have to protect yourself.

Speaking thus, Śiva, mounted upon his bull, went to the battlefield. Śiva was surrounded by thirty thousand mahābja pramathas (i.e. the goblin-attendants of Śiva) O king; the brave Vīrabhadra quickly going with (i.e. after mounting) his lion, guarded the left side of the great lord. The archer Maṇibhadra, the killer of the enemies, with (i.e. seated in) a chariot, protected the right side of Śiva. Climbing down from the high lordly mountain, Śiva reached the battlefield with his attendants.

58-62a. Seeing the great lord seated on his bull, the demons roared. Then there was a great din of (i.e. produced by) the armies of the demons and the pramathas. O king, a terrible destruction of the two (armies) took place. Then all those—Nandin, Mahākāla, Kāla, Skanda, the very strong Mālyavat, Puṣpadanta, Vṛṣalin, Svarṇadantika. Caṇḍīṣa, Madana, Caṇḍa, Kūṣmāṇḍa, and Guptalomaka—who had formerly run away from the battle came to the dangerous battle. The very mighty demons fought before Śiva. A very fearful fight between the warriors—the attendants (of Śiva) and the demons—took place.

62b-64. Then having caused the army of the attendants to flee, the very mighty (demons) surrounded Śiva on all sides with showers (i.e. volleys) of arrows, with pikes, lances, maces, mallets, clubs tipped with iron, as the sense-organs surround the soul with the five objects of senses. Then Śiva with arrows that were very fierce, killed the demons in the battle, as Māgha quickly and that moment only destroys the sins by means of a bath (taken in that month).

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Jālandhara Disguised as Śiva Goes to Pārvatī

Nārada said:

1-3. Then hearing the din of the demons on the battlefield, Jālandhara, seated in a chariot, came where Śiva was. Angrily and quickly he spoke to his charioteer Khaḍgaroman: "Send forth quickly the chariot to which a thousand horses are yoked. I shall bravely kill that ascetic, adorned with matted hair, sacred ash and bones. What is the power of the crippled one mounted on the bull in the battle with me?"

Nārada said:

4-6. Speaking like this to Khaḍgaroman the haughty (Jālandhara) took his fierce bow and quickly ran to (the battlefield) in his chariot. Vīrabhadra checked him who was coming (there) with sharp arrows. With his body made breathless, he covered him with arrows. Though (Vīrabhadra) the attendant of the lord of beings (i.e. Śiva) was equal to the gods, yet can the skulls attain similarity with the moon?

7-9. Maṇibhadra also pierced the Ocean's son (Jālandhara). He having killed Maṇibhadra by a noose said to the lord (i.e. Śiva): "O Mahādeva, if you have the practice in (wielding) weapons, then come to fight (with me). You strike me. In the battle I shall not strike you having matted hair." Him who was proudly speaking like this, Vīrabhadra, who was angry, covered with arrows, as the sun covers a lotus with his rays.

10-13. Then Maṇibhadra hit his army with a mace. O hero, striking a chariot after a chariot, a horse after a horse, an elephant after an elephant, he knocked them down on the earth. In a moment, the ground was tawny due to the mud-like blood and became difficult to walk over; and the chief attendants (of Śiva) struck down the demons from the mountain in the battle. The brave demons dropped dead on the ground. O king, the demons (thus) fell (on the ground) and the ground was full of (their) trunks, arms, heads, and the backs and trunks and thighs of the elephants.

Nārada said:

14-17. In this way he saw that Śiva was extremely difficult to be conquered in the battle. He also saw other signs in the world: A different lustre was (noticed) in the stars, the moon and all (objects). The sheath of the world was opened (*obscure*); and the lustre of the sun was quite different. O king, Jālandhara who was disappointed again thought: 'I have not seen that Pārvatī about whom Nārada told me much. Now how shall I see Pārvatī, seated on a perpetual place? First I shall go to see her, and after that I shall fight with Śiva.'

18-20a. Thinking like this with (i.e. in) his mind, the son of the Ocean spoke to demon Śumbha: "O brave one, O you, equal to me in heroism, in (the battle for) fierce victory, please fight after taking up a form similar to that of mine. The burden (i.e. the responsibility) of the camp and the army is (now) yours. I shall go to see that Pārvatī who has captivated my heart."

20b-25. Speaking like this, he took down from his body ornaments and gave them to him. He also gave him the armour, the weapons etc., so also the chariot along with the charioteer. Then, O king, the son of the Ocean, along with Durvāraṇa, left the army, and unnoticed he went to the secret cave of that (part of Kailāsa) mountain to the north of Mānasa and took up Śiva's form. Like that (i.e. like him) Durvāraṇa also had taken up the form like that of Nandin. Then the two, disguised as Śiva and Nandin, climbed up the mountain, on a peak of which Pārvatī along with her friends remained, O king. Seeing him who was resting upon Nandin's shoulder, coming (there) and pierced with arrows and seeing his garment smeared with blood, Pārvatī was amazed. Her friends like Jayā etc. being confused, went to him.

26-29. Going near Śiva (i.e. near Jālandhara who was disguised as Śiva), they, being very much afflicted, said to him: "O lord of gods, what has happened to you? By whom are you conquered in the battle? O lord how (is it that) you are distressed, and are weeping like an (ordinary) creature?" He who was thus addressed by them, gave separately (i.e. to each one of) them his ornaments. He slowly took down Vāsuki and others from his body. Seeing under his arm-pit, the heads of Gaṇeśa

and Kārtikeya that were cut off, Pārvatī wept (saying): "O Skanda, O Gaṇeśa, O Rudra." Then all her friends, emaciated through grief, wept.

30-38. At this time Nandin said to Jayā: "You (please) look after her. Maṇibhadra, Vīrabhadra, the brave Puṣpadanta, Dambhana, Dhūmatimira, and Kūṣmāṇḍa and others are killed in the battle. So also Caṇḍin, Bhṛṅgin, Kirīṭin, Mahākāla, Śṛṅkhalin, Caṇḍīṣa, Guptanetra, and Kāla and others are killed in the battle. O goddess, in the great battle I saw the heads of Gajānana and Kārtikeya whirling (round)." Saying so, he dropped them before her. Hearing these words of Nandin, and taking the heads of her sons, Pārvatī, saying, "O (my) son, O (my) son", lamented loudly. (She said:) "O (Kārtikeya, the) enemy of Tāraka, how (is it that) you were killed by the Ocean's son in the battle? You were consecrated by the gods as the general of their army when you were (just) three days old. O hero, how did you destroy (the demon) named Tāraka at that time? Did you fall on the ground because you were abandoned by Śiva? O son, I, who am luckless, have not seen the face of my daughter-in-law (i.e. your wife). O child, you have not enjoyed these pleasures which belong to the mundane existence. O dear Heramba, O Vīghneśa, O Lambodara, O Gajānana, O my son, who knocked you honoured (even) by the siddhas, on the battle-field. How and by whom was your vehicle, the mouse, killed?"

39-43. Gaurī (i.e. Pārvatī) who was lamenting like this, said to Śiva (i.e. to Jālandhara, who had disguised himself as Śiva) who was very much grieved: "O lord of gods, you are actually Rudra. You are Hara. Do not be afraid. Where has your bull gone? Is he killed by Jālandhara? What, dear to you whose body is wounded with arrows, should I do?" Then, on hearing the words of the goddess, Śiva, after heaving a sigh, said: "O darling, both your sons have been killed long back. Why do you lament in vain? O goddess, protect me now by giving me the contact of your body (i.e. by having sexual union with me)." Having heard these untimely and eager words of Śiva, Pārvatī said to the god: "You have not spoken proper words. O Śiva, the wise avoid sexual union when there is great grief, when fear is caused, at (the time of someone having) profound meditation, at (the time of) offering oblations, when

having severe fever, at (the time of) a śrāddha, at (the time of) a march, and in the vicinity of the elders and the old.

44-49. How do you solicit me who am afflicted with grief, troubled by (the grief due to) my son's death, weak, and languid with tears, and who am (mentally) sick?" Hearing these words of Bhavānī, that false Śiva (i.e. Jālandhara disguised as Śiva) who was fascinated by the beauty of Pārvatī, said with a selfish motive: "Those ladies (who) do not give (the pleasure of) sex to the afflicted men (i.e. their husbands) undoubtedly fall into the fierce Raurava (hell). O you beautiful lady, I am without my attendants, without my sons, and without intelligence. O you beautiful young lady, now I am without possessions and without everything. I am void of a good life. I have come here to ask you. Entering my house, I shall quickly cast my figure (i.e. kill myself). O Nandin, get up. We shall go to a holy place. Be before me (i.e. lead me). O dear wife, you go according to your desire. Give up your nature (of a royal wife)."

50-51. Hearing these words of the illusive Śiva, Pārvatī heaved a long sigh, and was paralysed by grief. When he was thus greatly agitated, she did not say anything for a moment. She who had fascinated the entire immobile and mobile world, was herself bewildered by him. I do not know (i.e. cannot conceive) the pain to the mind.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Viṣṇu Creates Illusion for Vṛndā

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. O brāhmaṇa, please tell me what happened after the illusive Śiva had (thus) bewildered Pārvatī.

Nārada said:

2-5a. The heart of Viṣṇu lying in the ocean was disturbed. All of a sudden, O best king, his eyes were full of tears. Seeing that sign of a great portent, the lord then getting up from the

bed of Śeṣa, looked at me and Vāyu, and thinking, 'What should be done (now)?' remembered (Garuḍa) the enemy of the serpents. He too, merely by being remembered, stood with his palms joined before the lord. Seeing before him (Garuḍa) the son of Vinatā, Viṣṇu said:

5b-9a. "O Suparṇa, go there where the battle is going on. Seeing whether the hero Jālandhara is killed or Śiva is deluded by him, quickly come (back) and tell everything to me. You alone are capable of seeing the battle between Jālandhara and the lord. Who else after knowing (what is going on) in the great battle would come (back) alive? At times the battle there was hard to be understood due to the showers of weapons and missiles. Going there (as fast) as the movement of an arrow, and with your body covered, come back after having observed the condition of Pārvatī."

9b-10. Lord Viṣṇu after having thought about removing the illusion caused by the demon, quickly gave a pill fully endowed with supernatural powers to Garuḍa. (He said to Garuḍa:) "O hero, due to this (pill) you will not be illusioned." Saying, "All right", he (i.e. Garuḍa) put it into his mouth.

11-17a. The bird (i.e. Garuḍa) thus urged by the lord went round Viṣṇu keeping him to his right, and he, of a wonderful speed, moved out, and having entered the sky, went (to the battlefield). Having gone there he saw unbearable terrible fight with the hosts of demons; but he did not know anything fully. Therefore, he flew speedily and went to (the region) Mānasottara, (a part of) the mountain, which was very high, inaccessible, and difficult to be reached even by gods. The lord of birds (though he tried) to see, could not see the place of Pārvatī. Having come there, (Garuḍa) the enemy of serpents heard a sound. After having gone near he saw the illusive lord of beings (i.e. Śiva). After having put into his mouth the pill, Garuḍa was not illusioned. He knew and understood that he was a demon and not Śiva. "Oh, (how) painful!" Saying so and weeping, he, having come (back) to the ocean, narrated the account to the enemy of Kaiṭabha (i.e. Viṣṇu):

17b-22. "O god, Jālandhara has imitated god Śiva. He, the sinful one, disguised (as Śiva) has deceived Pārvatī. Therefore, O Viṣṇu, if you are a god, (then now) go to the battlefield. O

lord of gods, (please) fight deceitfully with Jālandhara. I have seen his queen on the auspicious seat at Jālandhara. She was sporting by playing upon musical instruments and songs on the ground of the palace. She is more beautiful than Pārvatī and a hundred (nymphs like) Rambhā and Urvaśī. Now neither in the human world nor in the nether world is there a wife like her. Therefore, O Viṣṇu, she is fit to be associated with. What then can be said about (other) ladies. A man, who would touch her with his body would be blessed. And she is the wife of your wife's brother. Kidnap her who is dear to Lakṣmī. Do a good turn to Śiva and please yourself."

Nārada said:

23-27. Having heard the words of Garuḍa (Viṣṇu) dear to Lakṣmī, properly designed a remedy, and quickly sent away the bird. Having deceived Lakṣmī, and having covered her with a yellow garment (as she lay) on the bed, he went out with (i.e. after having taken up) another form and through his divine magical power Viṣṇu was fascinated by the love for Vṛndārikā. Seeing Hari (i.e. Viṣṇu) going (after) having covered himself, O Yudhiṣṭhira, Śeṣa also came in another form to Viṣṇu, and devoutly said to him: "You (please) wait. Allow me (to go). O Viṣṇu, tell me what I should do, where I should go. (Tell me) the mission. It would be a pleasure (if) I shall always eat after seeing your face."

The lord said:

28-32. I shall after covering my body, kidnap the charming wife of Jālandhara for Śiva and for helping Pārvatī. O brother, come on. We shall go to the impassable forest for accomplishing the seduction of Vṛndā.

After he said so, they both went to the forest. There Viṣṇu and Śeṣa who had matted hair and bark-garments, put up a hermitage which was auspicious and gave the fruits of all desires (i.e. gave the desired objects). They had disciples and disciples' disciples, taking any form they liked of tigers, lions, boars, bears, monkeys and apes. Then in that forest, Viṣṇu

attracted Vṛndā with a spell. He, the killer of Madhu, caused torment in her heart.

33-38. In the meantime the queen had a terrible torment. She caused the chowries to be waved by divine ladies. The slim lady, repeatedly thinking about the arrival of her lover, and with her body smeared with sandal, quickly fainted. The queen saw a dream in the fourth watch on the fourteenth (night of the month), which caused fear, and indicated the fear of widowhood. (She saw) the head of Jālandhara, which was dry, was smeared with white ash, the eyes of which were drawn out by a vulture, and the tips of the hair were loose. Kālī whose face was fierce, complexion was dark, garments were tawny, mouth was red, who had held a skull in her hand was eating him. She saw a dream like this and herself mortified. The queen saw the demon having the qualities (i.e. signs) of destruction.

39-40. Then the wife of the demon-king awoke due to songs and (the sound of) the musical instruments of the bards, so also by continuous singing, eulogies, words, praises of the race recited by kinnaras. Then having given all of them who were tired, wealth as a result of her favour, she warded them off (i.e. dismissed them), called brāhmaṇas and told them about the dream that she had seen. The brāhmaṇas, who had mastered sacred texts, said, after having heard the dream:

The brāhmaṇas said:

41-47. O queen, it is a bad dream; it is very fierce; it is inconceivable and causes fear. Give gifts which would destroy the inconceivable fear, to brāhmaṇas. (Give them) cows, garments, gems, elephants and ornaments.

The brāhmaṇas who were pleased (with the gifts) sprinkled (with holy water) the king's wife. Though sprinkled (like that) Vṛndā was tormented with affliction. Dismissing the excellent brāhmaṇas, she then went to the palace. Even (after) remaining there, the lady saw her own city burning. Then being attracted by Viṣṇu due to her own acts, she could not, O king, remain in her house. So the queen went to a forest. The slim lady, having got into a chariot to which female mules were yoked and which

was driven by her friend Smaradūtī, she quickly reached an auspicious forest which was having many trees and was full of various groups of birds, which was endowed with a stream of flowers, was adorned with divine ladies. There only gentle breezes could enter and nothing else.

48-52. Seeing that forest, Vṛndā remembered her husband. 'Now shall I see the hero Jālandhara that has come in front of me?' She did not get pleasure there. So she, with the chariot brought by her friend, and fascinated by Viṣṇu's illusion, entered another forest. Then the fawn-eyed lady saw the forest which was crowded with trees, was blocked by large rocks, created fear, was full of the fear due to lions and tigers, was resorted to by wolves and serpents, in which the trees with their branches touching the sky filled the caves with darkness. Seeing the fearful forest, the lady of unsteady eyes was frightened. Vṛndā said to her friend Smaradūtī who was driving the chariot: "O Smaradūtī, quickly drive home my chariot."

Smaradūtī said:

53-57a. O friend, I do not know the direction. Where should I take the chariot? The tired female mules are proceeding; and here there is no path. Let the chariot driven by destiny go anywhere. Here some flesh-eater will devour (us); (and this will) not be falsified.

Speaking like this, she who was very wonderful, quickly drove the chariot. The chariot reached (the place) where there were delighted siddhas. The siddhas were seen there, and the forest was fearful. The wind was not strong there, nor was the sound of birds (heard there). There was no lustre, no light. There was no water. There were not (seen) quarters and sub-quarters.

57b-60. Even in the characteristic of the chariot that reached there a change took place. The female mules did not neigh. There was no sound of the fellies of the wheels. The banners did not move. The bells did not tinkle. The great bells placed on the pillar of the flag did not make a sound. Seeing (things) like this, Vṛndā said to her friend: "O Smaradūtī, where

shall we go? The forest is full of the fear from tigers and lions. O friend, I did not have happiness in my house, in my kingdom, and in the forest."

Smaradūtī said:

61-66. O Queen, listen. In front (of us) see a very fearful mountain. Seeing (it) the female mules, perturbed by fear, do not go ahead.

Hearing those words of her the queen was frightened. Seeing the necklace round her neck, she quickly got up from the chariot. In the meanwhile there came a demon of a fierce form. He had three feet, five hands and seven eyes. He was extremely fearful. He was tawny; his eyes were like those of a tiger. His shoulders and his face were like those of a lion. His hair red like blood hung like the lord of birds. Seeing him, Vṛndā, having a (tender) body like the calyx of a lotus, was suddenly frightened. Having covered her eyes with her hands, she trembled like a plantain tree. Throwing the whip, the door-keeper said to the queen: "O Queen, protect me who am frightened. This (demon) runs to eat me."

67-71. In the meanwhile the demon reached the vicinity of the chariot. He tossed up the chariot and whirled it with the female mules (yoked to it). The queen fell on the ground like a female deer through the fear of a tiger. Smaradūtī was wounded (and lay) like an aśoka-creeper. Then the demon devoured all the female mules. He seized the queen by her hand as a lion seizes a female young deer. Then the demon spoke to her: "I have heard that your husband is killed by Śiva in the battle. If you want to live, then taking me as your husband live long and without fear from anywhere. Also drink sweet liquor along with good flesh." Hearing these words, the queen was as it were lifeless.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Vṛndā Goes to Heaven

Nārada said:

1-7. Then Viṣṇu wearing matted hair and bark-garments and the other one—his follower—having a fruit in his hand came (to Vṛndā). Seeing them, that fawn-eyed Smaradūtī wailed. Hearing her words (of wailing), the two said to her: "O auspicious lady, do not be afraid. We have come to protect you. How have you come to this fearful forest resorted to by the wicked?" Having comforted the slim lady like this, Viṣṇu said to the demon: "O you of a mean conduct, leave this soft-bodied and sweet-smiling lady. O fool, O you of a wicked conduct, what have you decided to do? You are out to eat the wealth of the three worlds. She is born as a result of the religious merit of the world. You are killing this ornament of the world. By killing Vṛndārikā now in the forest you will today render the world void of light and void of the pride of Cupid. Therefore, quickly leave her who is the deity of a comfortable palace."

8-12. Hearing these words of Viṣṇu, the demon who got angry, said: "If you are capable, then free her today from my hand." As soon as these words were uttered, Viṣṇu looked at him angrily. Leaving Vṛndā far away, he fell down after being reduced to ash. Then, she who was stupefied by the illusion of the lord of the world, said: "Who are you, the ocean of pity, who protected me here? O you treasure of austerity, with your sweet words you have removed by destroying the demon my physical and mental agony and torment. O dear ascetic, I shall practise penance in your hermitage."

The ascetic said:

13-20. I am Bhāradvāja's son, known as Devaśarman. Giving up all the pleasures, I have with this lad come to the fearful forest. I have many disciples going (anywhere) as they will, and also other disciples who can take any form they like. O auspicious one, if you desire to practise penance in my hermitage then come along. O queen, we shall go to another (forest) which is far away.

Speaking like this to the queen, Viṣṇu with a slow gait went into eastern direction to a forest full of ghosts and goblins, O king. Vṛndārikā, with her eyes full of tears went after him. Smaradūtī also, saying 'Wait for me', went after him. In the meanwhile a man of a sinful figure and of a wicked conduct spread out a nest. He, the chief of sinners, withdrew the net when it was full of creatures. Seeing the two ladies the hunter let loose the creatures after having fetched them. Smaradūtī said to her (i.e. to Vṛndā): "O Queen, he comes to eat me. May my friend hold me by the hand."

21-26. Having heard what she had said, Vṛndā saw the (man) with a loathsome face. Seeing him, she, dear to the Ocean's son, was shaken by gout due to fear. Being clearly alarmed, she, with Smaradūtī, ran into the forest. While running with her friend, she came to the ascetic's hermitage. In the ascetic's hermitage she saw wonderful things. (There) she saw birds with golden bodies and having many notes. She (there) saw a well rich in golden lotuses and a golden ground. The rivers were carrying milk. The trees were exuding honey. There was a store of sugar. There were also heaps of sweetmeats. All sweet eatables were there. There were many ornaments; and many divine weapons fell from the sky. The horses, being contented, played, jumped and fell there.

27-31a. In a small ascetic's hut Vṛndā saw a very handsome ascetic seated on a seat made of tiger-hide and illumining the three worlds. To him she said: "O lord, protect me from (this) sinner. What is the use of austerities, or religious merit, or silence or muttering prayers? O you whose wealth is your penance, there is no greater penance than the protection of those who are frightened." Thus she who was frightened and whose body was fatigued, spoke to him. Just then the wicked-souled catcher of all creatures arrived there. Queen Vṛndā who was afflicted with fear, embraced Viṣṇu at the neck. Like a creeper she clasped him with her arms in a manner in which the touch was pleasant. (He said to her:)

31b-35. "By means of your embrace the head of your husband will again be endowed with the entrie body with excellences. O you beautiful lady, now go to the picture-room." She who was told by the sage (to go to) the picture-room, entered it. Having

got on a divine bed, she took the head of her husband, and being extremely lustful, and with her eyes closed when she drank its lower lip (i.e. kissed it), the form of Jālandhara appeared there, O king. The lord of the world was similar in figure to her husband, had a chest like that of him; his height was like that of him; his words were like those of him; his temperament was like that of him.

36-42a. Seeing her dear husband having the full form, she said: "O lord, I shall do what is dear to you. Tell me about your battle." Hearing the words of Vṛndā, the deceptive son of the Ocean said: "O queen, listen as to how Śambhu fought with me. O dear one, the terrible Śiva cut off my head with a disc. Then due to your divine power and due to my mind having gone to you the head that was cut off was brought here, and due to the contact with your body it came back to life. O dear young lady, due to separation from me you have become distressed. Forgive me (this) unpleasant (act) that I left you and went to the battlefield." With these other words he then reminded Vṛndā (of his acts). Then, queen Vṛndā who had all auspicious pleasures like tāmbūlas, diversions, garments and ornaments, who was very lustful, firmly embraced her dear husband and kissed him.

42b-46. God Viṣṇu looked upon the pleasure due to the fascination of Vṛndā as superior to (that derived from) salvation, and as giving greater delight than derived from Lakṣmī. Then Mādhava, Kṛṣṇa who was the royal swan in the well charming and shining due to her sports, lost (all) his longing for Lakṣmī due to the beauty of Vṛndā. In that forest, Vṛndā turned into the form of Tulasī. That (Tulasī) that was highly purifying arose from the sweat of Vṛndā. Having, for some days, enjoyed the pleasure due to the contact with Vṛndā's body, (Viṣṇu) the lord of the world, thought about the mission of Śiva.

47-50. Once, after the sexual act was over, Vṛndā saw the ascetic (that is) Viṣṇu with his two hands thrown round her neck. Seeing him and freeing from the clasp of his hands her neck, she said: "How is it that in the guise of an ascetic you came to fascinate me?" Hearing her words, and consoling her, Viṣṇu said to her: "O Vṛndārikā, listen. Know me to be (Viṣṇu) pleasing to Lakṣmī. Your husband has gone to vanquish Śiva and bring Pārvatī. I am Śiva, and Śiva is me. We have (just)

remained separately. O sinless one, Jālandhara has been killed in the battle. Now resort to me."

Nārada said:

51-54. Hearing these words of Viṣṇu, her face was dejected. Then, O king, Vṛndārikā who was angry, replied: "Is it proper for you to have snatched the young wife of him who bound you in the battle, and released you at his father's words, and were honoured with various gems? How can he who is the master of righteousness, dally with the wife of another (man)? The wise say that even the lord enjoys (the fruits of) his acts. Since you, an ascetic in disguise, deluded me, someone disguised as an ascetic will take (away) your young wife."

55-59. Thus cursed Viṣṇu in a moment vanished. When Viṣṇu had left, that bed in the picture-room, those monkeys—all that disappeared. Seeing the forest desolate, Vṛndā went to her friend and told her about the trickery played by Viṣṇu. "I have abandoned the city. My kingdom has gone. (The existence) of my husband is doubtful. I am in the forest. Realising this, where should I, fashioned (thus) by fate, go? My seeing my dear (husband) was (just) a matter of my desires." Vṛndā who was extremely afflicted, heaved a hot sigh and said: "I have, and you too, O Smaradūtī, met with death." Thus addressed by her, she said: "You are my very life."

60-62. Hearing words spoken like that by her, Vṛndā, deciding that this should be done, abandoned her grief and went to a great lake, and with (its) water, she washed her body. Sitting in padmāsana on the bank and making her mind free from the objects of senses, she withered her body which was polluted due to the contact with (the body of) Viṣṇu. She, with her friend, fasted and practised very severe penance.

63-66. The host of the celestial nymphs came to Vṛndā from the world of gandharvas and said to her: "O auspicious one, go to heaven do not cast your body. This (your body) is the weapon of gandharvas; it conquers the three worlds; it is the best joy of Viṣṇu by which he was brought here; how (then) do you cast this (your) body which has obtained (i.e. fulfilled) the desires? Know that your husband is killed with an excellent arrow of Śiva. Be the ornament of heaven obtained through

religious merit. O angry lady, today quickly resort to the grove of the gods." Hearing the sacred precept for young married ladies, the wife of the Ocean's son said (these) words: "Lord (Viṣṇu), the great hero, left (Lakṣmī) the young wife of the lord of gods, and (coming) from heaven, honoured me, and I who was conquered by the god, was made a receptacle of pleasures. Being guileless I shall try to do that by which I shall obtain an immortal state." Speaking like this, Vṛndā, along with her friend, dismissed the bevies of the celestial nymphs. Bound by the noose of love for her, they came and went every day.

67-72. Then Vṛndā, through practice of abstract meditation, burnt, with the fire of knowledge, the qualities, and having withdrawn her mind from the objects of senses, obtained the highest (position). Seeing Vṛndārikā there the great hosts of the celestial nymphs were pleased. With showers of flowers from the sky they showered her. Having made a heap of dry (pieces of) wood, Smaradūtī put on it the (dead) body of Vṛndā, kindled the fire and entered it. That round image of the particles of Vṛndā's body was burnt. Collecting the remaining ashes, they threw them into Mandākinī. At the place where Vṛndā cast her body and went to heaven, was the Vṛndāvana, near the Govardhana mountain. The divine ladies (i.e. the celestial nymphs) went to heaven and told the divine ladies there. Having heard that, all the gods and others, with their minds delighted, gave up the fear of their enemy, the demon, and beat the furious drums. The group of attendants seated there obtained the charm of auspiciousness.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Jālandhara Gives up His Disguise

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. Tell me in detail, O sage, how Jālandhara took up the form of Śiva, and what he did on seeing Pārvatī.

Nārada said:

2-8. O king, when that deceptive Śiva (i.e. Jālandhara disguised as Śiva) longed for Pārvatī, she got disturbed, and did not speak anything. 'It is not proper on the part of the lord (to ask for sea) who was obtained by me by penance and is not unwell.' Deciding like this, Pārvatī did not speak to him, O king. Seeing no prevention, she, even as he was seeing, got up, went out and saw Gaṅgā flowing in the sky. Thinking her to be fit for residence, Pārvatī went to practise penance. Then, thinking, 'Even formerly I secured the lord through penance. Now also (I shall secure him) like that', she went with her friends from there. O king, in front of her Pārvatī saw Mandākinī falling from the mountain into the northern part of Mānasa. She was flowing like a series of necklaces separated from the garland of the sky. When the flood of the water of Mandākinī was drawn from the heaven, she dropped like the stream of the flood of the sacred texts from Brahmā's mouth.

9-13a. On seeing that Gaṅgā she was delighted. Having, with her friend, bathed (in the water of Gaṅgā) and honoured her, she then placed her body (i.e. was seated) on the bank of the golden river. Being mutually afraid, they looked at one another. Pārvatī said to her friend Jayā: "O friend, taking up my form (i.e. disguised like me), quickly go to him. Know the truth: Whether he is Śiva or someone else. If he embraces you and kisses you, then know him to be the demon who has come after resorting to deception. If he talks to you about my well-being or otherwise, then undoubtedly he would be Śiva. (Then) come here and tell me".

13b-17. Thus ordered by the goddess Jayā went near (i.e. to) Śiva. Seeing her coming, he was very much afflicted by lust, took her to be Pārvatī and embraced her. Then Jālandhara quickly ejected his semen; and O descendant of Kuru, his organ speedily became small. She said to him: "O demon, you shall never be Rudra. You are of a little semen (i.e. you ejected quickly). You are of a wicked behaviour. I am not Pārvatī. I am her friend." Saying so and resorting to (i.e. taking up) her own form, she again spoke to him: "Due to this sin of yours, you are (i.e. will be) killed by Śiva." Knowing thus (i.e. his falsehood), she reached (the place where Pārvatī remained).

18-23. Going there she said to Pārvatī: "O goddess, this one is Jālandhara, and not your husband Śiva." Then Śiva's wife (Pārvatī) was afflicted with fear, and she quickly entered a lotus. In the lotuses her friends became female bees due to the fear of Jālandhara, O king. Meantime, her guards, not seeing her, the queen, who had gone to the forest, were afraid, and quickly came to the battlefield. Then they were asked by Śumbha. They, with nervousness, saluted him and for getting themselves exempted, they approached Viṣṇu, the lord of gods (*obscure*). Hearing that Vṛndā was kidnapped, he (i.e. Jālandhara) being afraid of Rudra, left the battle. Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, the two very speedy demons, who were sent by Śumbha, came to Mānasottara; and from behind a bush said to the demon who had taken up the form of (i.e. who was disguised as) Śiva:

24-28. "O best king, what is the use of that glory that has gone to a foreign country, which the enemies do not see (i.e. care for) and which is not enjoyed with the kinsmen. O lord, Śumbha has been vanquished; your army has been killed by Śiva in the battle. Come on, come on; fight; you will not obtain Pārvatī. How can a jackal secure a lioness? O king, how can darkness have the lustre of the sun? From the Jālandhara-pīṭha (i.e. your seat) Viṣṇu has taken away your queen. Such a news is heard. Therefore, fight. Having quickly vanquished Śiva in the battle, be the lord of all. Or (i.e. otherwise), being cut to pieces by the arrows of Śiva you will reach his place."

29-33. Hearing these words of Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa, Jālandhara, with his eyes red, angrily moved out from that mountain. Having cheered up Caṇḍa, and Muṇḍa, Jālandhara gave up the form (i.e. guise) of Śiva, and (while) going along the path, said to Durvāraṇa. "See, O Durvāraṇa, what now Viṣṇu has done there. Having resorted to deception, he has taken queen Vṛndā to his place. An intelligent person should never trust his son-in-law who lives in his house. A wise man should dismiss him after having given him (in marriage) his daughter. A man should never keep his son-in-law in his house. (For) he (i.e. the son-in-law) gradually takes (away) his wealth, wife etc."

Durvāraṇa said:

34. The (fruit of an) act is had in the same way as it is

done, O king. You had come to kidnap Pārvatī (and) Viṣṇu took away your young wife.

Hearing his plain words, Jālandhara silently thought for a moment.

Jālandhara said:

35. Should I go to vanquish Śiva or the powerful Viṣṇu? When the two duties have come up, tell me which is more important.

Durvāraṇa said:

36-39. If you go to conquer Viṣṇu, Śiva will strike you from behind. The brave will strike (you). Śiva will not allow you to go. Therefore, having (first) conquered (Śiva), the lord of beings, and (then) having brought him under control, march against Viṣṇu, if you know his place. O hero, now quickly go to the very powerful demons. Wage a fierce battle which will mature well (i.e. give you good fruit) in heaven.

Having heard (these) words of Durvāraṇa Jālandhara went to fight with Śiva, the meditating sage.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Śukra is Confined by Kṛtyā inside Her Vulva

Nārada said:

1-5. Then Jālandhara saw the battlefield which was fierce due to the heaps of headless trunks, and which was inaccessible due to flow of blood and flesh and due to marrow, fat and bones. There, on the battlefield, the demon Jālandhara who was distressed due to his wife being kidnapped, saw Śiva, the lord of Pārvatī, who was mounted upon a bull, whose body was adorned with the hood of a fierce serpent, who was marked with the (crescent) moon on the mass of his matted hair, and whose body

was graced with the flame coming out of his eye. The Ocean's son saw him not fighting. Having quickly got into his chariot, the Ocean's son, getting angry, then said to Śumbha: "You have not killed the ascetic." Śumbha said to Jālandhara: "He has practised great (i.e. severe) austerities. Therefore, he cannot be killed. Śiva is invincible in the battle."

6-11. Having heard these words of Śumbha, the Ocean's son was violent with anger, and taking the Kalakedāra bow, he (i.e. Jālandhara) went to Śiva, surrounded by a thousand padma army of the demons. In the battle the dreadful (demon) discharged many arrows that were sharp, very large and that had iron props, as a cloud showers (water) on its arrival. In the battle, Śiva's attendants stopped the Ocean's son who was coming (to Śiva). Then (the demon) was angrily struck by Śiva with volleys of fearful arrows. By Śiva's arrows his armour was knocked down on the ground. He, even without the armour, looked like a mountain left by a cloud. The body of Jālandhara was again nailed by Śiva with arrows. From Jālandhara's body much blood flowed. By means of the stream of blood the entire earth was moistened.

12-17. Then the gods were frightened and the demons trembled. The brave pramathas left the battlefield and fled. A great form like that of a river spread everywhere. Then the Ocean's son said to Śiva: "You are the best among the archers. Now I shall do that by which you will perish." Speaking like this, he took up the Kalakedāra bow with the arrows and quickly filled (i.e. covered) Śiva with various kinds of arrows. On the battlefield Śiva with his body covered with crores (of arrows) shone like the sky with birds or a great mountain with trees. Seeing that Śiva was covered with those arrows discharged by the demon (Jālandhara), Vīrabhadra angrily ran to Jālandhara. The powerful and magnanimous (Vīrabhadra) troubled the Ocean's son.

18-23. Jālandhara, the brave son of the Ocean, who was angry, piercing (Vīrabhadra) with thousands of arrows reduced to pieces as small as the sesamum-seeds, with his arrows, (Vīrabhadra's) bow, arrows, chariot, umbrella and charioteer. Then Vīrabhadra, who was without his chariot, struck the Ocean's son with a mace. In the same way he (i.e. Jālandhara) too struck him with a mace and knocked him down on the ground. Seeing him fallen due to the stroke with mace, and very much bewildered, Maṇibhadra

then ran to Jālandhara in the battle. Seeing him who was very angry, coming (to him), the demon, son of the River (Gaṅgā) scattered his implements with his arrows. Then shaking off his bewilderment, he, roaring like a lion, got up. Then Vīrabhadra and the valourous Maṇibhadra angrily struck with two rocks the River's son remaining in the sky.

24-27. Seeing the two rocks to have fallen on his body, Vīrabhadra roared and struck the River's son (i.e. Jālandhara) with the blow of his fist. Maṇibhdra seized the Ocean's son by his feet and whirled him from his chariot. That was a great wonder. The very powerful king of the demons, though seized by Maṇibhadra, struck Maṇibhadra with the blows of his feet and knocked him down. That mighty-armed Jālandhara also (knocked down) Vīrabhadra with (the blow of) his fist. Then Nandikeśvara surrounded by attendants came (there).

28-35a. Seeing him coming Śumbha with his soldiers obstructed him. Then the attendants (of Śiva) and the demons came to one another fighting duels. In the battle Śumbha went to (fight with) Śilādaja, and Rāhu to (fight with) Mahākāla. Niśumbha ran to Kolāhala and Ketu to Kāla. Śailodara (ran) to Guha (i.e. Kārtikeya) and the very mighty Jambha (rushed) to Mālyavat. Mahāpārśva went to Caṇḍa and Caṇḍīśa to Romakaṇṭaka. Vikaṭāsya went to Bhṛṅgī and Urunetra to Gajānana. In this way the chiefs of the attendants went (to fight with) the lordly demons. Then Śilādaja, having an ape-like face, struck by the weapons and arrows of Śumbha, bruised him with great peaks of mountains. Śumbha, afflicted by that, struck Śilādaja with a śakti. Then in the battle Mahākāla struck that Rāhu with a śakti. He struck his chariot with a great rock. The brave Kolāhala was struck with a śakti by Niśumbha. Taking a śakti, he struck his chariot with the charioteer.

35b-41. The very angry demon, the lord of demons, who was without a chariot, struck Kolāhala with a sahasraphaṇin (a serpent-like weapon). Having struck him, he speedily went to another chariot. Struck with the phaṇicakra in the battle, he, in a moment, shook off his swoon, quickly got down from his chariot, took a sword and shield, and cut off everything including the chariot of Niśumbha. Again getting into his chariot, he struck the demon with arrows. The very strong Niśumbha too,

amazed at his valour, very angrily destroyed with a śakti his chariot with the horses. Kolāhala, the mighty one who was without his chariot, went running to Niśumbha and by chaining his arms rendered him who had a chariot, chariotless. Kāla seized Ketu's tail and whirled him into the sky. He too threw a rock. He (i.e. Kāla) quickly cut off the rock.

42-45. Seeing the rock pounded, he struck him (i.e. Ketu) with his fist. Kāla with his entire body bruised by Ketu, ran away through fear. In the same way Śailodara struck Kārtikeya on his chest with a mace. Kārtikeya also struck him with a śakti and knocked him down on the ground. Seeing the demon dead due to the stroke of the śakti, Kārtikeya roared. There was a surprise as when Krauñca was rent asunder. With volleys of arrows Mālyavat struck Jambha in the battle. Jambha too left him swooning after piercing him with sharp arrows.

46-51a. Then Mahāpārśva seized the chariot with volleys of arrows and rendering it horseless easily took it into the sky and knocked down the horseless chariot at Caṇḍa. Seeing the chariot without horses, Caṇḍa took up (i.e. mounted upon) an elephant. Caṇḍa struck with his mace Mahāpārśva attacking him. That very fierce demon, ignoring the blow of the mace, struck Caṇḍa with his fist and knocked him on the ground. The great demon Romakaṇṭha, struck by the weapon of Caṇḍīśa, seized Caṇḍīśa by the feet and dropped him on the top of chariot. All of a sudden he fell on the ground, and he of fearful eyes, went to (attack) him. Gajānana was struck with arrows by Urunetra in the battle. He struck him with his tusk in his chest and knocked him down on the ground.

51b-57. In a moment Urunetra became pacified, quickly came to the chariot, and, with a mallet, struck (Gajānana) on his head adorned with red lead. (Gajānana) the lord of (Śiva's) attendants struck the demon (Urunetra) on his chest with a spear having a sharp edge. From his mouth came out a great demon having nine heads and eighteen arms. O king, he too ran to (Gajānana) the son of Śiva. Gajānana was obstructed by Navaśīrṣa and Urunetra. Though his body was wounded, he angrily took an axe. With that the chief of the attendants (of Śiva) cut off their weapons in the battle. Seeing that Gajānana was obstructed by the two (demons), Senānī—Kārtikeya—quickly

came (there) and killed Navaśīrṣa. Having killed Navaśīrṣa in the battle, he ran to Urunetra. O king, with the blow of his (weapon called) śakti, Kārtikeya knocked him down. Jālandhara, seeing Kārtikeya, and surrounded by his army went to (attack) him.

58-62a. Śiva too through affection for his son and with his attendants (came there) to kill the demons. Then between the two armies a wouderful and very fierce battle took place. In the battle between Śiva and the Ocean's son the heaven and earth were as if lifeless. Then the angry Jālandhara, the lord of the demons, fixed a fierce arrow and with that arrow adorned all round with feathers numbering a thousand hundreds, struck Śiva on his forehead. It sank up to its feathered part into Śiva's head like the moon and like the sun in the evening in the autumn at the end of the summer.

62b-66. Then Śiva took up a great arrow which resembled fire, in whose speed there was wind (i.e. which was speedy like wind), at the head of which remained fire and the sun, at whose knots remained death; in the arrow goddess Dharā (the earth) remained. With that arrow Śiva quickly pierced the Ocean's son in his chest. Due to the stroke of the arrow, he, with his body wounded by that arrow, and wet with a stream of blood, fell down like a mountain struck by thunderbolt. At that time the demons wailed, and the pramathas (the goblin-attendants of Śiva) roared. Seeing the Ocean's son fainted, the demons obstructed Śiva. Some were eager to protect him, others stood around him.

67-70. While Jālandhara, the Ocean's son was in a swoon, Śiva struck the army of Jālandhara with arrows. After a long time Jālandhara gave up the swoon (i.e. regained consciousness), and, full of fear, saw his army killed (by Śiva) and dispersed on the battlefield; he mentally remembered his great preceptor, Śukra. Remembered by him, Śukra quickly came to Jālandhara. Wishing him well, Śukra said to the Ocean's son: "O great king, O mighty one, what mission of you should I do?"

Nārada said:

71. Hearing these words of Śukra, Jālandhara very much honoured Śukra, his preceptor, and saluting him said:

The king said:

72-76. O Śukra, bring back to life all these demons that are dead all around.

Thus addressed by the Ocean's son in the battle, he observed the army which measured twentyfive thousand yojanas and which was further and further crowded with the bodies and chariots of the demons piled up on earth up to ninetyfive yojanas. (He) then (saw) the earth as it were full of the bodies of the warriors and horses (and elephants). Having sprinkled the demons with charmed water, Śukra made them rise up. While Śiva tied firmly the mass of his matted hair with serpents, Śukra made the army rise up by means of a charm.

77-80. Śiva thought on seeing the demons that had come, as lions do on seeing tigers or lordly elephants do on seeing pigs: 'What has happened here? Somewhere he creates (i.e. brings back to life) the dead.' Thinking like this on the battle-field, Śiva saw on the battlefield, Śukra bringing back the demons to life and running faster (i.e. very fast). Then Śiva who was angry, made up his mind to kill Śukra. Requesting the Trident-holder (Śiva) in private, Śukra said to him: "I am a brāhmaṇa. How do (i.e. can) you kill a brāhmaṇa skilled in all lores? O Śiva, you will incur (the sin of killing) a brāhmaṇa on killing me."

81-84. Hearing these words of Śukra, Śiva gave up the trident. On remembering the former account, viz. the sticking of Brahmā's head (he thought:) 'A brāhmaṇa is not to be killed, even if he takes away one's life dear to one. But this (Śukra) who is bringing the demons back to life, must be fully curbed by me. Therefore, I shall quickly throw him leading the life of a demon, into the vulva of a woman.' From the third eye of Śiva who was thinking like this, a female deity to whom sacrifices are offered for destructive and magical purposes, quickly (came out). She was naked, very fierce; she had let loose her hair; her belly was big. Her breasts were big and hanging; Her vulva, fangs and eyes were fearful.

85-89. Śiva, who was addressed by her, 'Order (me)', said to her: "O Kṛtyā, put quickly the wicked-minded preceptor of the demons into your vulva; and carry (i.e. keep) him in your vulva

till I kill Jālandhara. After the demon Jālandhara is killed, you take him out and release him." That deity to whom sacrifices are offered for destructive and magical purposes, who was thus told by Śiva, ran to Śukra. On seeing her the demon fell on the ground; and the demons fled. Shaking Śukra by seizing his hair, she embraced Śukra, and laughing, she held him in her vulva, O Jayanandana. Seeing his preceptor put by the deity into her vulva when Jālandhara fixed the arrows, she disappeared.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Jālandhara Is Killed

Śrī Nārada said:

1-8. Then Jālandhara said to Śiva: "O Śiva, protect yourself now. O Śiva, I shall today throw you there where Viṣṇu lives. Then, having dragged Brahmā, I shall throw him into the ocean. When all of you are seized (by me) I am then the lord of all." Having spoken like this, he entrusted the responsibility of the army on the demons Śumbha etc. The warriors like Niśumbha guarded the endless four-limbed army. Seeing all the excellent demons like Śumbha, Niśumbha, Pheṁkāra, Pheruṇḍa, Dhūmralocana, Ketu, Biḍālajaṅgha, Rāhu, Durvāraṇa and Yama, so also Kālāsura, Lavaṇa, Bhūmiretas and the demon Andhaka, and Raktavīrya and others, Caṇḍin and Cāmuṇḍin, ready to fight in the battle, the attendants of Śiva like Vīrabhadra and others, confronted them in the battle, O king. Then a horrible, fierce and thrilling battle took place, in which even the principal demons, suffering from wounds, fell (down). O king, the attendants (of Śiva) struck with all weapons by Śumbha and others in the great war, fell and others fled.

9-12. The demons, having vanquished the attendants, confronted Śiva. They showered him with volleys of arrows, as the clouds shower the Meru mountain. Then Śiva, seated upon his bull (Nandin), drew his bow and struck with volleys of arrows the demons on the battlefield. The powerful one struck the

demons with arrows with sharp horse-shoe-shaped heads. He quickly killed the remaining army on the battlefield with weapons and missiles. The battlefield was covered with elephants, men and horses that had fallen (in the battlefield).

13-18a. It appeared like the earth (covered) with mountains cut off by thunderbolt. Then the Ocean's son fashioned an illusory (form of) Gaurī that was endowed with the quality of beauty and adorned with all ornaments. Making an illusory (form of) Jayā the Ocean's son said: "Quickly go in front of Śiva, and quickly fascinate him on the battlefield." The illusory Jayā thus addressed, went (to Śiva). Having gone to the battlefield and with her hair let loose she wept. Asked by Śiva, she said: "From the mountain north of Mānasa your dear wife, Pārvatī, O god, has been kidnapped by the Ocean's son." Hearing these words of her, the bull-bannered (god Śiva) said to her: "O Jayā, you go to the bull (Nandin). The demons will kidnap you."

18b-24. Then, Jayā, mounting upon the bull (Nandin) and embracing Śiva, said: "O Hara, I (shall) go. I cannot live without Pārvatī." Taking the moon that had entered the matted hair of Śiva, she—the illusory form—quickly got down from the bull. Clasped by the illusory form, he went to the battlefield. Then hearing that Pārvatī was kidnapped, Śiva became worried. O king, encircled by the demon's illusion, he did not recognise himself. In the meanwhile, the Ocean's son surrounded by a great army, came after having put the illusory Pārvatī in his chariot to Śiva. In the same way, there was the sound of musical instruments in (i.e. declaring) the victory of Jālandhara, due to which the earth shook and the mountains echoed. The Ocean's son showed Pārvatī to Śiva. Rudra (i.e. Śiva) too saw his dear wife who was distressed due to separation (from him), who was helpless, who was slim and whose eyes were over-anxious, sitting in his enemy's chariot.

25-30a. She was again and again crying, "O lord, O dear Rudra." Śiva saw Pārvatī seated in the strong enemy's chariot like the sacred text remaining in the possession of a heretic. 'How shall I get (back) my beloved?' (Like this), Śambhu deluded by the demon's illusion lamented. 'O dear one, the demons deluded me. How have you been kidnapped?'

The Ocean's son, seeing Śiva bewildered with grief and delusion, laughed and uttered (these) words as kind (person would do). "You are without any authority. You are without sexual love. Though you are the lord, you have become miserable without Pārvatī. O Śiva, do not weep. I (shall) give you your dear wife. Having taken Pārvati, I have spared you the fight."

30b-36. Speaking like this to Śiva, he got down Pārvatī from the chariot. Then he sent his army towards Śaṅkara. To take Pārvatī who was crying "Protect (me), protect (me)", Śiva too, along with (his) bull (Nandin), quickly ran towards his (i.e. Jālandhara's) army. When Śiva seized Pārvatī with his hand, the demon Śumbha quickly seized her and remained in the sky. The mighty Śiva discharged his spear to kill the demon Śumbha. Śumbha left her and she fell on the spear. She, beautiful in all limbs and weeping, when left, fell along with the spear in front of Śiva, and saying "All right" died (there only). Rudra, seeing the illusory Pārvatī dead, was full of grief and delusion, and wailing "O dear one", he fell in a swoon on the ground. Having regained consciousness (after) a moment, he cursed Śumbha and others on the battlefield: "Pārvatī will kill you."

Nārada said:

37-42. O king, in the previous age of Manu the demons Śumbha and others were knocked down by the goddess due to Śiva's curse. Having cursed them and having gone out he wailed, "O dear one, where have you gone after abandoning me, the distressed one, on the battlefield? Giving up attachment for me, I Śaṅkara, am made distressed by separation from you. O dear one, even Viṣṇu does not know me to be abandoned by you (i.e. does not know that you have left me). O goddess, in the fire-vessel of Dakṣa, you had offered your head. You were again obtained by me. (Then) how do you abandon me again? O you of a beautiful body, O Girijā, get up, get up. Communicate with me." In the meanwhile, Brahmā remaining in the group of deities, knowing that Śiva was deluded by the demon's illusion, came (there). He who was invisible, spoke to the wailing Śiva:

Brahmā said:

43-45. You are without grief, delusion, father and mother. You do not have pain, pleasure, son, a wife, or an enemy. You are not born of a father, nor will you be born (of a father). You are looked upon (like this) by the sages? (Then) whence this delusion? O lord, you are one; you have taken up various forms, as the sun is seen (to be many) in the waves of the water. Those who observe restraint, reach by means of meditation your feet, the great form, unintelligible, and quite indescribable. This your beloved is not distressed like you. O god, give up the illusion fashioned by Jālandhara. That Pārvatī has gone into the bud of a lotus. Fight; kill the multitude of enemies. Protect us.

46-52. Having heard these words of Brahmā, Śiva knew (the illusion). Knowing the demon's illusion, he threw a large rock (at the demons). With that he killed three hundred crores of demons. O king, then having very angrily mounted upon his bull (i.e. Nandin), Śiva took his Pināka bow and arrows. Then the son of the Ocean (i.e. Jālandhara), seeing Śiva, free from the illusion, manifested quickly another group of illusions which deluded the lord of gods, which was very wonderful, which was very powerful. Jālandhara turned into (one) having a crore of arms and fought Śiva with trees, weapons and missiles; and he, the Ocean's son, put the earth that was decorated with the red chalk into the intermediate space; and the Ocean's son made the earth adorned with many charming temples of deities, full of various (kinds of) flowers. Celestial nymphs, more lovely than Menakā danced there. Śambhu, forgot (to fight) and instantly abandoned the bow, and deluded by (the sound of) musical instruments and songs and by the tāṇḍava dance of the lord of demons, started, being mounted upon the bull.

53-60. Seeing Śiva seated on the bull deluded, the Ocean in an embodied form, to delude him, roared with tāṇḍava, songs, musical instruments, and dances. He, constantly being rejoiced, threw the beings into the ocean; "Where are all those deities? Where are the attendants led by Nandin? You who are respectable, are deluded by the demon's illusion. O lord Śambhu, why do you neglect (him)? Taking out the disc remaining in your belly, and fashioned for killing him only, O Maheśa, kill

Jālandhara with that in the battle." By (i.e. on hearing) these words of Kṛṣṇa, and recollecting himself to be the lord, he quickly mounted upon the bull and came to the great battle. Seeing that Śiva coming, that angry demon Jālandhara surrounded by his entire army, stopped him. The form of Śiva, who was angry, (was one that) would destroy the creation. In his third eye there were fires and the demons were like moths. O king, seeing the lord's form full of fierce flames, the demons like Śumbha, so also those like Rāhu seeing Śiva, were frightened and through fear they entered the nether world.

61-66. Seeing many soldiers killed in the great war, and seeing certain demons like Śumbha that were spared, and (seeing a few) who had fled away, Jālandhara remained on the battlefield like a mountain. Seeing actually the true form of Rudra, he was delighted. Then Jālandhara laughed and said to Śiva: "Withdraw your (fierce) form with which you are burning (the world with) the mobile and the immobile. Give up your divine power and fight with a weapon." Hearing these words of Jālandhara, Śiva then said (to him:) "O lord of demons, ask for a boon. I am pleased with your deed that you are fearless even after having seen such a (fierce) form. O demon, even the entire universe is not able to look at this form of me and at my lustre. (But) you are fearless in that respect."

Nārada said:

67-71. Regarding this to be a favour of Śiva, Jālandhara, having no desire for the mundane existence, asked from him release as a boon in the form of absorption into him.

Śrī Mahādeva said:

O demon, this your divine body endowed with all pleasures and divine powers, and lovely due to Vṛndā and charming remaining here will meet with death here. Not knowing the highest soul that is one and immutable, for a while, how do you give it up? How do you desire salvation? Your dear queen Vṛndā has been taken away through divine power. Having known the nature of Brahman, she has reached that highest position. Now she is difficult to obtain, so also that position is

difficult to obtain. Ask for a boon in the worldly existence between heaven and salvation.

Jālandhara said:

72-75. O god, the position of salvation is obtained by a blessed one. Now I am blessed, since, struck by you I am seeing you.

Śiva said:

O demon, if you are eager to go to my place, a holy place, then (striking me) with strong arrows, quickly make me angry. Then, O sinless one, I shall kill you, (and) you will go to my place.

Hearing the words of the great god, Jālandhara said to Śiva: "I shall not first strike you who are adorable to the whole world."

Nārada said:

76-81. Thus addressed, Śiva quickly struck the Ocean's son with arrows and those arrows stuck to the Ocean's son's body shone as the bamboos blazing with fire shine on the skirt of Lohagiri. Jālandhara filled the body of Śiva with arrows. With those arrows Rudra shone like the sky full of birds. Then, O king, a duel took place between Jālandhara and god (Śiva). There is no other striker than Śiva. There is no other one than the Ocean's son who bears (the strokes). With thousands of crores of mountains taken out from the cavity of the earth, the Ocean's son filled the lord of Pārvatī in the battle. Then the demon (Jālandhara) was struck on his chest with a spear by Śiva. From his mouth fearful and yawning Jvara emerged. He having the face of a lion and a human figure was (called) Vīrajvara.

82-92. Seeing Jvara having a lion's face, moving out of the demon's body, (Śiva) made a 'hum' sound. From it a Śarabha[1] came out. He was knocked down by the Śarabha, sent out by

1. Śarabha: A fabulous animal said to have eight legs and be stronger than a lion.

Śiva. Seeing that Saṅkara, along with the lord of bulls (viz. Nandin) invincible, that Ocean's son speedily came near the bull. Seizing the bull by his tail, he whirled him into the sky. (That) mighty-armed Jālandhara threw him on the Himālaya mountain. Then Girijā's husband (i.e. Śiva) discharged the very fierce trident. Catching it with his hand near Śiva, the lord of the demons, the Ocean's son, mounted upon his chariot, took the bow (called) Kalakedāra, and filled with arrows Śiva standing on the earth. Śiva cut off his weapons and arrows and pounded with arrows his chariot which was ten yojanas extensive, along with the charioteer and horses. Jālandhara too, who was chariotless, ran to Śiva in the battle. A fierce, wonderful and thrilling battle took place between the two. Seeing it, the deities, through fear of the unexpected deluge, trembled. The two, of a fearful valour, shaking the earth by means of their foot(-steps) and making the sky tremble with the sounds struck each other with all missiles.Then seeing the great might of the lord of demons, Śiva, through his divine power, took a multitude of weapons. Then a demon, having a crore of arms and with eyes fearful due to the fangs, though without a weapon, quickly ran to Śiva.

93-99. On the battlefield he bound Śiva with the bond of his large arms. Then with a sword he cut off the jungle (i.e. multitude) of his hands. Rudra, overpowered by the arms of the Ocean's son, became dark blue. The Ocean's son easily fought with him. Though his hands were cut off, he fought as Rāhu (would fight) with his head. The River's son (Jālandhara) pleased Śiva with his fighting. Śiva who was pleased, said: "Ask for a difficult boon." Jālandhara too said to him: "Give me your position. Please do not insult me who am without arms and weapons. Quickly give me a divine power; otherwise I shall destroy you." Saying so, and being equipped with arms he struck him on his chest. Then, vomitting from his mouth the Sudarśana disc which he himself had formerly fashioned, he took it in his hand and angrily raised it. Its brilliance was like that of a crore of suns and it was swallowing (the world including) the mobile and the immobile.

100-106. With that disc the head of Jālandhara was cut off (by Śiva). Then that head flew into the sky to (the distance of) a hundred yojanas. O king, then it having a terrible mouth

with a hundred fangs, having eyes of heaven and earth, went, with the speed of a tiger to the house of Brahmā. Then again seeing the head in heaven Śiva ran to the head, from which blood was oozing and which was making a fearful sound. Then the quarters disappeared, and the sky (too) disappeared. The light of the luminaries was not there, and the earth trembled through fear. Rudra, with the disc, quickly cut off the head coming to him. Being cut into two it fell upon the Himālaya mountain. Then the pieces of Jālandhara's head quickly entered Śiva when all the beings were watching it.

107-112. That trunk of Jālandhara, red due to blood, danced. Again and again demons sprang up from his throat. They were repeatedly struck by Śiva with the disc. The entire earth was filled with the marrow of the Ocean's son. O king, due to the marrow only, Medinī (i.e. the earth) got that name. In the northern region of Kailāsa, where the blood of the excellent demon turned into a hill, the city (called) Śoṇitapura was (situated). Then seeing the heaps of flesh covering every place, the lord (i.e. Śiva) remembered his sixtyfour attendants. Due to the discerning recollection the goddesses also reached the vicinity of Śiva. With the palms of their hands folded they said: "O Śiva, what do (i.e. should) we do?"

Mahādeva said:

113-120. Together you who are permitted by me, should quickly eat the heaps of the demon's flesh which resemble mountains.

Brāhmī, Māheśvarī and Kaumārī so also Vaiśṇavī and Vārāhī, and Māhendrī, (all) thus ordered by Śiva, and shining with their own attendants, looked at the heaps of flesh with a cruel eye, and in a moment they vanished. Then the weak body of Jālandhara was powerfully approached by śaktis. When his body was seized by them, from his body came out a lustre; it reached Śiva and in a moment it disappeared. That lustre resembling the sun's lustre, got merged into Śiva. Thus the enemy of gods met his destruction from Śiva. Maheśvara being pleased, said to them all: "Ask for a boon." Then all those female attendants asked the lord of the world: "Those men in the mortal worlds, who desire enjoyments and salvation and boons, will always worship the group of

your attendants (the Yoginīs) in their house. Due to your favour all that is desired by them will come about."

Mahādeva said:

121-128. I am the giver of a boon to him on the earth, whosoever will every day devoutly worship your group. To my devotee or that of Viṣṇu who hates the group of Yoginīs, I shall be terrible and will take away his religious merit.

Thus were boons given to the Yoginīs in the battle. In the meanwhile Śiva remembered that Bhavānī (his wife) and his bull (Nandin). On just being remembered Pārvatī and the bull came there in a moment. Śiva's beloved (i.e. Pārvatī) came there along with her friends. Giving up her Bhrāmarī form, she mounted upon half the portion of (the body of) Hara. Then, O king, with Pārvatī, Śiva rejoiced. To the Yoginīs he said: "Drink the blood on the trunk of Jālandhara. Hearing it they were very much delighted. The Yoginīs, after (eating and) drinking the flesh, marrow and blood danced with joy. Then seeing their sport, Śiva was pleased; and taking up his Bhairava form, he drank it in the midst of them. The group of the Yoginīs were of sharp fangs and huge bodies.

129-132. Even today at (this) time they are seizing the flesh. Therefore, demon Jālandhara killed in battle, does not get up. Then there came the groups of deities like Brahmā. The sages, the Maruts and the gods praised the great lord (Śiva). The quarters were bright; fragrant breezes blew; showers of flowers fell from the sky. The drums also, that were beaten, produced sound above (i.e. in the sky) when he was consecrated. Then the earth was sprinkled with the continuous showers of honey by the swarms of bees going over it and humming sweetly, being blinded by the fragrance. In his assembly fell the shower of flowers dropped by gods.

133-136. When the Ocean's son was killed by Śiva with the strokes of the arrows, shower of flowers appeared (there), beautiful women danced and, yakṣas led by gods and kinnaras sang (songs). Śiva, having great fame due to his victory, and then being praised by groups of gods, siddhas and cāraṇas, went to his own mountain. From the mountain, Pārvatī also surroun-

ded by her friends, went to the Śveta mountain. The divine damsels waited upon her with a shower of flowers. Lord Śiva, the kind god, knowing (this) established the groups of gods in their own positions, and gave them his wealth. What more should be said when great pity would be shown by the lord? Or which other god is there who would bring under his control the earth on all sides? Gods having got (back) their kingdom, shone as before. Being the regents of quarters (again) they shared portions in sacrifices.

Nārada said:

137-142. O king, I have thus narrated in a sequence to you the very wonderful account of Jālandhara, hero of the world. Even now Viṣṇu being under his sway, does not leave the Milky Ocean. Know that everyone enjoys the fruit of his own act(s). To remove your grief I have told you this excellent account. As long as the body lasts, a man being influenced, experiences (the fruits of) his actions—pains and pleasures. O king, there is no greater refuge than knowledge. Even Kṛṣṇa and others when bound in a body have pleasure, pain etc. Then what can be said about others who are averse to detachment? Knowing that such is the course of acts, which is the strongest of all, be patient, wait for the arrival of auspicious acts again. At (the proper) time, you will, after vanquishing your enemies, regain your kingdom.

143-148. Having heard this account, (a man) is not overcome by griefs. Here (the four goals of human life, viz.) righteousness, material welfare, sensual enjoyments and salvation are properly told. A brāhmaṇa gets the auspicious knowledge leading to heaven, removing sins, destroying delusion, and a kṣatriya obtains a kingdom. Hearing (it) a vaiśya would obtain wealth, and a śūdra happiness. A weak king who is deprived of his kingdom but remains on the good path, again obtains his kingdom by hearing it every day. O King, after hearing this, the good do not like to hear anything else, as a man does not like to hear the harsh crying of crows after hearing the sweet notes of cuckoos. Having heard this guileless account, he who is dear to the hearts of the good, should please the reader (of this

account) by (giving him) gold, sesamum-seeds, garments etc. and land. When he is pleased, he would get the (desired) fruit.

149-155. When the reader—the preceptor—is honoured, the deities also would be pleased. He should give gifts of food and honour brāhmaṇas. He, being prosperous with sons and grandsons, is always victorious. He who listens to this excellent account, is born in Viṣṇu's world. O king, those best men who, under this pretext, listen to the cause of the rise of Tulasī, have no sin anywhere. By listening to or telling this auspicious, sin-removing greatness of Tulasī (a man) undoubtedly attains salvation. By seeing Tulasī destroying sins, planted in one's house, the sin of a brāhmaṇa's murder perishes. There is no doubt about this. (A man) should worship Viṣṇu with Tulasī (leaves) in Kārtika and Māgha. Viṣṇu's worship in Vaiśākha is especially laid down. Even by once going round it, all the sin goes (away). Those śūdras who are always engaged in (giving) gifts, are purified within (due) time. Their bodies also become worthy of worshipping deities. Those devotees of Viṣṇu, now very rare in this Kali age, have gone far away from sins.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

A Description of Śrīśaila

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. O Nārada, where is that charming mountain Śrīśaila? Which is the holy place there ? Which god is worshipped there ? Tell me now in which direction it is said to lie in the world.

Nārada said :

2-9. O king, listen; I shall describe the best mountain Śriśaila, hearing about which people are free from such sins as killing a child. The grove on the mountain is charming and is resorted to by sages. It is full of many trees and creepers adorned with various kinds of flowers. It is resounding with the notes of

swans and cuckoos. The mountain grove is made fragrant with śrī trees, kapittha trees, śirīṣa and rāja trees. So also with pārijātaka flowers and with kadambas and udumbaras, with many fragrant flowers. It is very much resorted to by all the wives of the sages with their disciples. Some are engaged in studies and some in lectures. Some there have raised their hands; others are standing on their toes. Some are engrossed in meditation upon Śiva; others are devoted to Viṣṇu. Some are not eating anything; some are given to eating leaves. Some eat bulbs, roots and fruits; others have observed the vow of silence. Some are standing on one foot; some are sitting in the Padmāsana[1] posture. Some, eating no food, have practised very difficult penance.

10-13. There are auspicious hermitages and various beautiful rivers. There are many natural ponds and many tanks. O great king, all around is indeed seen the mountain, on which, O king, Mallikārjuna always remains. On top of the mountain is the charming peak, on merely seeing which peak (one gets) salvation. There is no doubt about it. Resorting to (i.e. in) the south stands the best mountain. Here is very beautiful Pātālagaṅgā.

14-18. Merely by bathing there (i.e. in it) a man is free from great sins. On seeing the peak of Śrīśaila, on dying at Vārāṇasī and on drinking water at Kedāra certainly there is no rebirth. It is a great place of the ascetics and meditating saints. Therefore, with every effort one should see it. This is Vijñānadeva (god of wisdom). He destroys great sins. There is the charming city Siddhapura giving divine pleasures, in which celestial damsels sing and rejoice. Therefore, this best mountain gives joy on seeing it. Those men who desire salvation, should see it.

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1. Padmāsana: A particular posture in religious meditation. In it the left foot is placed on the right thigh. Then the right foot is placed on the left thigh.

CHAPTER TWENTY

The Story of Sagara

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-5. O best divine sage, hear about the very auspicious Haridvāra. Gaṅgā flows there (i.e. by it); and it is said to be the best holy place. There gods, sages and men dwell. (So also) there god Viṣṇu himself always takes resort (i.e. lives). O child, this great holy place came about in ancient days. On merely seeing it sin goes away. Here due to special religious merit Gaṅgā has become very holy. Due to her touching Viṣṇu's feet she has the water of (i.e. coming from) the feet of Viṣṇu. O wise one, Bhagīratha brought her along the path. The magnanimous one (thus) emancipated his ancestors.

Nārada said:

6-9a. O god, who is the Bhagīratha of great penance to whom you have referred, who brought the holy (water) for the good of the people? The holy place on Gaṅgā is very auspicious and destroys all sins. All people say like this that it is the best holy place. He who, even from (a distance of) hundreds of yojanas would say 'Gaṅgā, Gaṅgā', is freed from all sins, and goes to Viṣṇu's world. How did he bring it? What (was his) act? Tell that, O you of a good vow.

Mahādeva said:

9b-16. Who brought Gaṅgā, how he brought it at the very beautiful Gaṅgādvāra—all that I shall tell you in due order. Formerly there lived Hariścandra, (the only one) observing truth in the three worlds. He had a son, Rohita, solely devoted to Viṣṇu. He too had a son, called Vṛka, most righteous and established on a good path. In his family was born his son Subāhu. His son was Gara by name. He was extremely righteous. Some time, for (some) reason, the king became extremely unhappy due to fate. For religious reasons he was not censured in his country. Taking his family he went to Bhārgava's hermitage. Through compassion he was then protected by Bhārgava there. O brāhmaṇa, there a son named Sagara was born to him.

Looked after by Bhārgava, he then grew in the holy hermitage. He performed all (sacraments like) thread-ceremony of (i.e. befitting) a kṣatriya. He learnt (the use of) weapons and studied the Vedas.

17-24. Having received the missile of (i.e. presided over by) Agni, king Sagara moved on the earth and killed Tālajaṅghas with Haihayas. He, of a great penance, also killed Pāradas with Śakas.

Nārada said:

O Śaṅkara, tell in detail the greatness of Sagara. The very powerful great king of the solar dyansty is well-known.

Mahādeva said:

Due to a calamity of (i.e. befalling) Gara, his kingdom was taken away by Haihayas, Tālajaṅghas and Śakas, O Nārada. These tribes—Yavanas, Pāradas, Kāmbojas and Śakas (showed) valour. That king Gara whose kingdom was snatched, then went to a forest. The distressed one followed by his wife, died (there). His auspicious wife was pregnant and observing a vow. Formerly, he with his wife had chosen (i.e. gone to) Bhārgava with a desire for a son. She, having arranged the funeral pyre of her husband in the forest, wept. Aurva (the family preceptor) prevented Gara's wife, O Nārada. He told her about that son (of her) most righteous, good and dear (to all).

25-28. When she was told about the son, she refrained from dying. Then after two months he rose (i.e. was born) in Aurva's hermitage. Aurva performed his sacraments like the birth-rite. O great sage, thread-ceremony etc. took place there. Due to his contact with Aurva, he studied everything like Veda etc. Having taught him Vedas and sacred texts, he taught him (the use of) the missile of (i.e. presided over by) Agni, difficult to bear even for gods, O glorious one. He was endowed with that power of spiritual life in the battle.

29-36. Being angry, he quickly killed Haihayas with his might. He captivated them and obtained fame in the (three) worlds. Then those Śakas with Yavanas, so also Kāmbojas and Pallavas, being struck by him, sought the shelter of Vasiṣṭha. Vasiṣṭha, the very lustrous one, having made an agreement kept

away king Sagara after granting them protection from fear. Sagara, keeping his pledge and the preceptor's words, struck them righteously, and made them deformed. He half-shaved the heads of Śakas and sent them away. He completely shaved the heads of Yavanas and also of Kāmbojas. Pāradas are clean-shaved; Pallavas keep moustache. Having thus vanquished all he collected religious merit. Having conquered this earth, the all-righteous victorious king quickly prepared for (the performance of) a horse-sacrifice. His horse, moving near the south-east ocean, was taken away near the shore and was taken into the (interior of the) earth.

37-42. Then through his sons he got that region dug up everywhere. They digging there did not find the horse in the great ocean. They who were in a hurry, saw there an ancient man—the ancient man was Kapila, the lord of the worlds. The fire produced from the eyes of him getting awake, burnt sixty thousand of them; (only) four of them remained (unburnt). O brāhmaṇa, (the four) continuing his family (were:) Hṛṣīketu, Suketu, the other one Dharmaratha, and the brave Pañcajana. The revered lord Viṣṇu himself gave him five boons: (continuation of) family, salvation, good fame, ocean and son. Due to that act he got the state of ocean. He obtained that sacrificial horse from the ocean. He, of a great fame, performed a hundred horse sacrifices.

CHAPTER TWENTYONE

The Greatness of Haridvāra

Nārada said:

1. O you master of knowledge, tell (me) how those very mighty, brave, valorous sons of Sagara, sixy thousand in number, were born.

The lord of Pārvatī said:

2-8. Sagara had two wives whose sins were burnt by penance. Aurva, the best sage, being pleased, granted them boons: One

(queen) chose sixty thousand powerful sons. The (other) one, having the boon, asked for one son supporting the family. Then in a gourd one gave birth to many brave sons. They were brought up in due course by the nurses. The boys enhanced love when the pitchers were filled with ghee. For the magnanimous ones the cows were milked. The noble ones grew due to that milk only. One son by name Pañcajana became the king. Then there was the powerful (son) of Pañcajana named Aṁśumat. Dilīpa was his son, and his son was Bhagīratha. He, of a good vow, brought (to the earth) the greatest river, Gaṅgā. Having brought her to the ocean, he made her his daughter.

Nārada said:

9. How did he bring Gaṅgā? What (kind of) penance did he practise? Tell me all that. O you treasure of kindness, you are of a good vow.

Mahādeva said:

10-16. For the well-being of his ancestors he went to the Himālaya mountain. Having gone there he practised penance for a myriad years. That first god who is untinged, was pleased (with him). This Gaṅgā given by him came (here) from the sky. There god Viśveśvara always remains. Seeing Gaṅgā coming, he seized that Jāhnavī (i.e. Gaṅgā). He held her in the mass of his matted hair for a myriad years. Due to the prowess of the lord Gaṅgā did not move out of it. Then he (i.e. the king) thought: 'Where has my mother gone?' Having thought like this through meditation (he knew): 'The lord has seized her.' Then that king Bhagīratha went to Kailāsa. O best sage, having gone there, he practised a severe penance. Then he propitiated (me). I gave him the river. Having given up (i.e. plucked) one hair, the river was given (to him).

17-23a. Taking Gaṅgā, he went to the nether world where his ancestors stood (dead). Then the first name of Gaṅgā was said to be Alakanandā. When she went (i.e. flowed) to Haridvāra, she came to be called Viṣṇupādodakī. That is an excellent holy place which is not easily accessible even to gods. Those men who bathe at that holy place, and especially after seeing (the image of) Viṣṇu go round (the image) keeping (it) to their right,

do not experience grief. There are many heaps of sins like (those of) killing a brāhmaṇa etc. All those perish on always seeing (the image of) Viṣṇu. Once I had gone to Haridvāra, the place of Viṣṇu. Due to the prowess of that holy place, I became of the form of Viṣṇu. Those best men who go (to this holy place), go to Viṣṇu. Those human beings—men and women, have four arms everywhere. Merely by seeing (the image of) Viṣṇu they all go to Vaikuṇṭha.

23b-28. For me also that holy place Haridvāra is a superior holy place. It is the principal holy place among the holy places. It gives the four goals (of human life). In the Kali-age it gives religious merit to men, and gives salvation and material welfare also. There the clear (water of) Gaṅgā always flows. This auspicious, excellent, account of Haridvāra is told (by me). Eternal fruit is (obtained) by those who listen to it. A learned man, merely by seeing (the image of) Viṣṇu obtains that fruit which is obtained when a horse-sacrifice is performed or when a thousand cows (are given). O brāhmaṇa, many sins of this kind —all of them—perish due to just seeing (the image of) Viṣṇu.

CHAPTER TWENTYTWO

An Eulogy of Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Prayāga

Mahādeva said:

1-5. O best sage, I shall narrate the importance of Gaṅgā, as it has been told, by just listening to which sin perishes at that moment only. He who would utter (the name) 'Gaṅgā' even from (a distance of) hundreds of yojanas, is freed from all sins and goes to Viṣṇu's heaven. O Nārada, the river has risen from the lotus-like feet (of Viṣṇu), is well-known by the name Gaṅgā, and she destroys large heaps of sins. (There are other rivers like) Narmadā, Sarayū, so also the river Vetravatī, Tāpī, Payoṣṇī, Candrā, Vipāsā, Karmanāśinī, Puṣyā, Pūrṇā, Dīpā, Vidīpā and Sūryatejasā.

6-10. A man obtains that fruit which he certainly gets by giving a thousand bulls in a moment by seeing Gaṅgā. This Gaṅgā is especially very meritorious for those who have killed brāhmaṇas. Gaṅgā smites the sins of those who are connected with (i.e. who have fallen into) a hell. O sinless one, a man obtains that fruit just by seeing Gaṅgā which is (obtained) at the time of the lunar eclipse or the solar eclipse. O dear one, as the darkness goes away at the time of sunrise, similarly the sin (of a man) perishes due to the prowess of Gaṅgā. This (Gaṅgā) is always honoured in the world. She is pure. She destroys sins. She is always of the nature of auspiciousness. She was formerly produced by Viṣṇu. She is of a divine form. She is the mother. She is said to be the purifier of the helpless.

11-14. As Viṣṇu is (the best) of the gods, so is Gaṅgā the best river (among the rivers). For those men who regularly bathe in (the month of) Māgha, there is no grief for three hundred kalpas. There is no doubt that having bathed and drunk (water at the holy place by which) Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī flow, a man enjoys salvation.

Mahādeva said:

O lord, the talk which I affectionately do about you is your praise. What I eat is an offering to you. That I go is (due to) my being sent by you. That I sleep quickly at the pair of your lotus-like feet may be (treated as) my prostration (before you) in the manner of a staff. O lord, may you, the lord of the universe be pleased with whatever I do. This is that water of Yamunā, by seeing which, by saluting which, or by holding which on the head, men are freed.

15-18. O you daughter of the Sun, O you great river, men are overpowered by the dangers like poverty, diseases, death, due to the mundane existence, till they do not see your very blue water and hold it on their heads. Today that Gaṅgā, the recollection of which even from (the distance of) a lakh of yojanas instantly cuts off the streams of sins, overcomes the row of sins, the utterance of whose name purifies the world, will luckily come within (our) sight. The path of the divine river is reached with a delighted mind eager to see her. (Even) the first creator went to this divine river. It is not a great wonder that a

bath, offering of sandhyā, a libation of water as the śrāddha ceremony, worship of gods, a śrāddha-ceremony, feeding the brāhmaṇas—all this becomes perfect (in this river) and gives delight to the lord. O Gaṅgā, you are Brahman turned into goddess (Gaṅgā); you give great delight. Accept my materials of worship. Remove my sin. My salutation to you.

19-21. O Bhāgīrathī, O glorious goddess, I salute you who carry the water which is righteousness in a liquid form, which is the essence of the nectar (flowing) from the lotus-like feet of the enemy of Mura, which is a boat of (i.e. helping to cross) the ocean of grief, which is a flight of steps leading to heaven and lauded by men and gods, which removes all sins, which has excellent merits, (and) which is lustrous. O Gaṅgā, O you heavenly river, O you who emancipate the people plunged in the ocean of sins, O you who have destroyed the mass of darkness (of sins) by means of the spotless lustre of your rising waves, O you, who purify the world, O goddess, purify (me) who am overcome with the fear of sins, who am a recipient of your favour; O mother, O you who give shelter to him who has sought it, protect me who am frightened. O (my) heart, O my friend, why do you trouble? I am alarmed due to the fear of (falling into) hell. 'Why do you fear?' Thus are the words heard of (i.e. uttered by) a sinner in the hell. Do not be afraid. If I have secured her who competes with the mountain (i.e. mass) of sins, then listen to my course (i.e. the course I shall have). How then will I have hell? What else do I have (as) righteousness or wealth?

22-23. In it (i.e. in the water of Gaṅgā) bathing is said to be the experience of joy due to the praise of the lord of all and others; seeing it the divine women are delighted due to the possibility of meeting gods and their lord. O daughter of Jahnu, those who engaged in curbs and restraints bathe in your water, clearly obtain godhead. Even those who do bad deeds (also secure godhead). In this (matter), the Vedas are the authority. O (my) intellect, may you have good thoughts like this. O (my) mind, well-being to you. O (my) feet, may you two be always remaining at the place (of the lord). May the eyes see well. O (my) speech, O you dear to me like my own life, may you, with the body of your virtues manifested, obtain the nourishment of

beings, so that through all of you I obtained (i.e. would obtain) the agreeable, incomparable merit due to the holy place.

24-32. O best sacred place Prayāga, the ornament of the three rivers, viz. Śrī Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī, O lord of all, favour me. Take me up (to heaven). With your lustre destroy the darkness of ten kinds. O you lord of speech, O lord of pious men, that lord of the holy places, viz. Prayāga, whose white and blue bank the gods like Indra, the best among the learned resort to for the destruction of their sins is victorious. That lord of holy places, viz. Prayāga, where the divine river (i.e. Gaṅgā) having had confluence with Yamunā, shakes off the three torments of the people like the one relating to the self, is victorious. That lord of the holy places, viz. Prayāga, where the sacred fig tree, of a dark colour[1], covers (the place) with its darkish shadow, and cuts off (i.e. removes) the dark (i.e. great) fatigue of the people when it is seen, is victorious. That lord of holy places, viz. Prayāga, the portion of religious merit, which Brahmā and others resort to after abandoning their act, and where Yama will cast his staff, is victorious. That lord of holy places, viz. Prayāga, resorting to which gods and divine sages—deities among men—do not care for heaven and the best kingdom on the earth, is victorious. It is well-known that (the holy place, Prayāga) destroys sins and that discerning takes place by the splendour of its name. That is the lord of holy places, viz. Prayāga, which holds all around the charming beauty of the chowries, where the white and black excellent rivers (i.e. Gaṅgā and Yamunā) meet, where the primitive fig tree exceedingly shines like an umbrella, is victorious. That lord of the holy places, viz. Prayāga, where at the confluence[2] of Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī (that is underground) they take those who bathe there to the position of Brahmā merely by means of their offering sacrifice with sacred rice grains is victorious.

33-35. (That is the holy place Prayāga to go) where many persons of good words pass a crore of lives saying, 'I (shall) go,

1. Śyāma: Name of a sacred fig-tree at Allahabad on the bank of Yamunā.

2. Triveṇī: The place near Prayāga where Gaṅgā joins Yamunā and receives unerground Sarasvatī.

I (shall) go'. Excellent years of those who long for the fixed one may pass there. He who cannot be described by words, and who is reached through lakhs of fortunate (occurrences), becomes ours (i.e. favours us) at Prayāga. Prayāga where sacrifices move (i.e. take place constantly) and which is marked by confluence (of the three rivers) becomes the guest of our sight (only) through good luck. Brahmā and others, after having properly and fully thought about the fruit of (sacrifices like) the horse-sacrifice, have prescribed this dear Prayāga for those men who long for heaven, who are worried as to how to reach the position of gods by means of hymns of the eulogy of the glory and hymns of praise (of gods), and who are unable to perform sacrifices in the Kali age. I have not performed the sandhyā (prayer) due to faults like carelessness and impatience. Let the sandhyā of me who am performing it here be accomplished for my entire life. Elsewhere also he, meditated upon in a penance where his greatness is loudly proclaimed by the distant people with love continuously gives the desired position without any expectation.

36-37. I salute in my heart that Prayāga which is surrounded by the confluence of the three rivers, the rich dust of which is incomparable, which is the lord of holy places, which shines with the presence of several (rivers), which itself is an excellent deity. Have we practised good penance, have we performed sacrifices, have we given various kinds of gifts to worthy recipients, have we worshipped gods, have we resorted to a good holy place, have we honoured a group of good brāhmaṇas, due to which we have reached that capital of Śiva which gives happiness?

38-41. Due to my good fortune of many existences I have had (i.e. reached) the city of Śiva, which destroys all sins, which is full of all wonders, and which is a boat to cross the ocean of the mundane existence. I have received the fruit of a good birth. (My) family is made pure. My soul is purified. (Thus) everything for me has been done. What else is there that stands above all? Since what is said, viz. 'A living man sees a lakh of good things' is not false, I have physically reached Kāśī with my transitory sight. The counting and worship of the sacred places and phalluses of the lord (found) in Kāśī, the divine land, cannot be done even by gods. With my hands joined, I

salute the ancient pious (places), which are secret or open here (i.e. in Kāśī). O men, what is the use of the fear from the multitude of sins, what is the use of the joy due to innumerable meritorious deeds done (by you), what is the use of the pride due to the study of the lores, what is the use of dejection due to the fault of dullness, what is the use of the pride due to prosperity, what is the use of being tormented due to poverty, if the lord of the universe is seen after bathing in the water of Śrī Maṇikarṇikā?

42-49. Since that city of Gadādhara, which though it has little (worldly) affluence, (though) it is small, is not reached even by desires, is not the object of even a dream, but which is reached by means of the power rich with enthusiasm, which is accompanied by the attachment of the mind and the practicability of which is possibly manifest, instantly gives salvation. I think that it is not my act, it is not the strength of the acquisition of an ancestor, it is not the unmoving authority of my kinsmen; how then can it be numbness or torment (which has brought me here)? Reaching Gaṅgā, Prayāga, Yamunā, Kāśī difficult to reach, on the coming of a good occasion—for that the favour of Śāradā, giving a great fruit, is triumphant. I salute that Gadādhara who is actually present in Gayā, and who even though remembered from a distance at the time of a śrāddha, gives salvation to the manes. A man with a potsherd and pitiable words, after having come from a remote place and after having trodden the path that is difficult to cross, and that is crowded with hostile (factors like) mean tigers, hyenas, thorns and snakes, should first solicit the immutable one; (for) O you rich Gadādhara living in water, he longs to see you every day. How do you, pleasing the deities and the universe by showing yourself as a result of the śrāddha at Gayā, resort, like an indifferent (person) to this apathy? O Gadādhara, I have performed the śrāddha through your favour. O god, (now) allow me to go home. The eulogy of the four deities gives the wealth of heaven. A man should recite it at the time of śrāddha. A man should recite it at the time of bathing every day. Due to the listening to it, reciting it and muttering it the bath is equal to the bath at all holy places. O brāhmaṇa, the sins due to (one's) deeds perish by listening to the praise of Prayāga, Gaṅgā and Yamunā.

CHAPTER TWENTYTHREE

The Importance of Tulasī

Mahādeva said:

1-5a. O Nārada, listen. I shall tell you the importance of Tulasī, having heard which a man is free from sin from his birth to his death. Everything of Tulasī including leaves, flowers, fruits, roots, branches, skin, and stem is purifying, so also the clay (where) Tulasī-plant grows. Those whose bodies are burnt with the Tulasī-wood (are free from sins), so also he on whose dead body the Tulasī-wood is placed and who (i.e. whose dead body) is cremated after doing so, is freed from sins. He who at the time has (heard) the narration (of the virtues) or the recollection of Viṣṇu, and who is cremated with the Tulasī-wood is not reborn.

5b-11a. If among hundred (pieces of any other kind of) wood, there is (just) one (piece) of Tulasī-wood (in the funeral pyre), the man would have salvation just at the time of cremation—even if he has committed a crore of sins. By being sprinkled with the water of Gaṅgā, religious merit becomes meritorious. (Pieces of) wood become meritorious (when) mixed with Tulasī-wood. As long as the funeral pyre mixed with Tulasī-wood is burning, all his sins committed during crores of kalpas are burnt. Seeing (the dead body of) a man being burnt with the Tulasī-wood, Viṣṇu's messengers take him (to Viṣṇu's world) and not Yama's servants. Freed from thousands of crores of existences, he goes to Viṣṇu. On those men seated in aeroplanes, who (i.e. whose dead bodies) are burnt with Tulasī-wood, gods drop handfuls of flowers. All the celestial damsels sing and singers sing songs.

11b-21. Seeing him, Viṣṇu, along with Śiva, is pleased. Taking him by his hand and physically taking him to his house Viṣṇu would clean all his sins in the presence of gods after having celebrated a great festival along with cries of victory. The sin of men is burnt in the fire-chamber or crematory when the fire of Tulasī-wood is burning with clarified butter. Those men who perform a sacrifice with the fire of Tulasī-wood, would obtain the fruit of an Agniṣṭoma sacrifice for every sesamum-

seed that is offered (into the fire). A man who offers the incense of a (piece of) Tulasī-wood to Viṣṇu, obtains the fruit similar to that of a hundred sacrifices (or that of the gift) of a hundred cows. That food which a man cooks as an offering of eatables to the deity with the fire made from Tulasī-wood, is indeed offered to Viṣṇu. O lord, he who offers one lamp (lighted from) the Tulasī-wood to Viṣṇu, obtains the fruit of the religious merit earned by (the offering of) thousands of lakhs of lamps. There is no devotee seen on the earth like him who offers the sandal (-like paste) of Tulasī-wood to Kṛṣṇa. O best brāhmaṇa, he becomes fit for the favour of Viṣṇu. Having devoutly smeared Viṣṇu with the sandal(-like paste) obtained from Tulasī-wood in the Kali-age, he always enjoys in the vicinity of Viṣṇu. He who with his body smeared with the paste from Tulasī-wood, worships Viṣṇu, obtains the fruit of having given a hundred cows in one day—(a fruit) of the worship offered for a hundred days.

22-27. Listen (i.e. note that), the fruit of the religious merit remains as long as the sandal(-like paste) from the Tulasī-wood, used for smearing the image of Viṣṇu, remains in the temple. The same fruit as the religious merit a man would obtain by giving eight prasthas of sesamum-seeds, is obtained by the favour of Viṣṇu. If a man gives (i.e. puts) a Tulasī-leaf on the piṇḍa offered to the manes, then for every leaf (that is thus offered) the manes are contented for a hundred years. A man should especially bathe with (i.e. after applying to his body) the clay at the root of Tulasī. As long as the clay is on the body, he has bathed at a holy place. When a man worships with the shoot of it (i.e. Tulasī), he has performed the worship with many flowers (and it lasts) as long as the moon and the sun (shine in the sky). All that sin like (that due to) the murder of a brāhmaṇa perishes by touching or seeing (the plant) when there is a garden of Tulasī (-plants) in one's house. Even by seeing it, O Nārada, all that (sin) perishes.

Mahādeva said:

28-33. Now I shall tell you something else. Listen (to it) with a concentrated mind (i.e. attentively). O best of the divine sages, I have not told it to anyone (else). In whichever house, village or grove there would be the Tulasī(-plant), Viṣṇu, the

lord of the world, being pleased, would stay there. In that house where there is a Tulasī(-plant) there is no poverty, no (hostile) action due to (i.e. from) the kinsmen, no grief, no fear, and no disease. Everywhere Tulasī(-plant) is auspicious, and especially so in a sacred place. Due to its being planted on the earth, it is always in the vicinity of that god (i.e. Viṣṇu). When Tulasī is planted (by men) they eternally get Viṣṇu's position. When Tulasī is devoutly worshipped, Viṣṇu pacifies portents, fearful diseases and many ill-omens. Wherever the wind goes (i.e. the breezes blow) after taking the fragrance of Tulasī, (all) the ten quarters are (thereby) purified, so also the aggregate of beings of four kinds.

34-46. O best sage, the deities, Śiva, Viṣṇu always reside in that house in which there is the clay (taken from) the root of the Tulasī(-plant). At its root is Brahmā. In the middle is god Viṣṇu. Rudra stays in the sprout. Therefore, Tulasī is purifying. All that sprinkling himself with water which a man does at the time of the sandhyā (prayer) is snatched by demons, and gives (i.e. takes) him (to) hell. He who carries on his head the water dropping from the Tulasī-leaf obtains the fruit of (having bathed in) Gaṅgā and would get the fruit of a gift of a hundred cows. If he especially plants a Tulasī(-plant) in the temple of Śiva, he would stay in heaven for as many yugas as is the number of the seeds (of Tulasī). Formerly goddess Pārvatī had planted a hundred Tulasī-trees (i.e. plants) on the Himālaya for Śaṅkara. I bow down to Tulasī. A man should plant (a Tulasī-plant) on a parvan day (i.e. the day of the four changes of the moon), on (any other) occasion or in Śrāvaṇa, or on a Saṁkrānti-day. Tulasī gives great religious merit. A poor man who worships Tulasī daily would be rich. The image of Viṣṇu, bringing about every kind of success, gives fame also. Viṣṇu is present there where there is a Śālagrāma stone. Bath and (giving) gifts there is hundred times superior to (doing so) at Vārāṇasī. The religious merit is a crore of times superior to (a visit to) Kurukṣetra, Prayāga, and Naimiṣāraṇya. All that religious merit which can be had at Vārāṇasī, would be (secured) there where the mark of the form of Śālagrāma is present. By means of the worship of a Śālagrāma stone, a man would quickly destroy all that sin due to the killing of a brāhmaṇa etc.

CHAPTER TWENTYFOUR

The Importance of Prayāga

Mahādeva said:

1-8a. I shall tell you, as I have heard, the greatness of Prayāga where live people who are intent upon giving large gifts and practise meritorious acts. That holy place (called Prayāga) where (i.e. by which) Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī are (flowing) is the best and is inaccessible even to gods. Such (a holy place) was never there (in the past) nor will be there (in the future). The excellent, holy place called Prayāga is best among all the holy places as the Sun is among the planets or the Moon among the stars. O learned one, he who would bathe in the morning at Prayāga, is free from great sins, and goes to the highest position. A man desiring absence of poverty should give something (to a brāhmaṇa at Prayāga). There is no doubt that a man who after going would bathe there, becomes rich and lives a long life. A man who sees the undecaying fig-tree there, (his sin due to his having committed) the murder of a brāhmaṇa perishes. That fig-tree is called *Akṣaya-vaṭa* and is (i.e. will be) seen even at the end of the kalpa.

8b-13. Since Viṣṇu lies on its leaf, it is known to be immutable. Men dear to Viṣṇu, worship (the lord) there. A man should get it worshipped (i.e. should worship it) after having covered it with a thread. The god called Mādhava (i.e. Viṣṇu) always stays there happily. One should see (the image of) him. One then is freed from great sins. Gods, sages, and men having resorted to their own places, always stay there everywhere. A man who has killed a cow, or who is a cāṇḍāla, who is wicked or of a wicked mind, or who has murdered a child, so also who is not learned, dying there becomes one having four hands and lives in Vaikuṇṭha for a long time.

14-19a. O best among the divine sages, listen. A man who bathes at Prayāga during the month of Māgha, has no (limit to the) number of fruits (that he obtains). We hear that *āpaḥ* (i.e. waters) is said to be *nārāḥ* (i.e. waters—*āpaḥ* and *nārāḥ* are synonyms) in the entire world. Therefore, he is called Nārāyaṇa. He gives pleasures and salvation to those who have bathed

there. As the Sun is best among the planets, the Moon among the stars, similarly Māgha is the best in (i.e. for) all acts. When in Māgha the Sun is in the Capricornus sign, a bath in the morning, even in the clear water of a very small puddle, gives heaven even to the sinners. O learned one, such an opportunity is rare in the three worlds with the mobile and the immobile. He too who has made an effort (to bathe) here at Prayāga and would bathe (every day) for three days or five or seven days would grow like the Moon in his family, O best brāhmaṇa.

19b-23. The mobile and immobile living beings, so also human beings and others, go soon to Vaikuṇṭha after having resorted to the holy place of Prayāga. Those sages like Vasiṣṭha and like Sanaka also repeatedly resort to the holy place of Prayāga. There, in the excellent holy place of Prayāga, all (gods like) Viṣṇu, Rudra and Indra live. They recommend giving gifts here, so also observing restraints. After having bathed there and drunk (water) there, there is no rebirth.

CHAPTER TWENTYFIVE

A Three-night Tulasī Vow

Nārada said:

1. Like this, I have, through your favour, heard the greatness of Tulasī. Now tell me the vow of Tulasī (lasting for) three days.

Sadāśiva said:

2-9. O very intelligent brāhmaṇa, listen to this ancient vow, having heard which (a man) gets freed from all sins. There is no doubt about it. Formerly in the Raibhyantara kalpa there was a king (named) Prajāpati. His well-known and very chaste wife was Candrarūpā. She practised this vow giving the fruits of all desires. Her vow, giving (the fruit of) righteousness, worldly prosperity, sensual enjoyment lasted for three nights. The life of those who have listened to the Tulasī-vow is fruitful.

O Nārada, on the ninth of the bright fortnight of Kārtika, a man should observe restraint, be pious, control his senses and sleep on the (bare) ground. Intending to practise the Tulasī-vow, he, being pure and with his mind controlled, should, as a rule, sleep in the vicinity of a Tulasī-grove. Then at mid-day, he, having bathed in the pure water in a river etc., should duly gratify (with oblations) the manes and deities. He should get fashioned (a) golden (image of) Viṣṇu with Lakṣmī. He, desiring his welfare, should not be dishonest as regards wealth. Then he should get fashioned a pair of garments. The garments should be yellow or white. He should duly commence the propitiatory rite for the nine planets.

10-14. Having put an oblation of rice, barley and pulse boiled for presentation to the gods and the manes, he (then) should offer a sacrifice to Viṣṇu. Having on the twelfth day carefully worshipped the lord of gods, he should duly place a pure pitcher without any bruise with five jewels and with leaves and herbs. On it, in a vessel, he should place (the image of) Viṣṇu with Lakṣmī. He should put it at the root of Tulasī to the accompaniment of Vedic and Purāṇic hymns. He should sprinkle the grove of Tulasī with water only. He should bathe the god of gods, the best one in the world, with the five[1] sweet things (viz. milk, sugar, ghee, curd and honey) (and to the accompaniment of this hymn of solicitation): 'May that lord of gods, the divine one, who is of endless forms, who is of the form of the entire universe, who in the water sustains the creation of the world, who through his Māyā creates the world, be pleased with me'.

15. This is the hymn of solicitation. 'Come on, O Acyuta, O lord of gods, O mass of lustre, O lord of the world. You always remove the darkness. Protect me from the ocean of the mundane existence.'

16. This is the invocatory hymn. Good bath is (given to him) with the five sweet things and with sandal mixed with water, so also with the water of Gaṅgā and other (rivers). 'May Ananta (i.e. Viṣṇu thus) bathed, be pleased.'

1. Pañcāmṛta: A collection of five sweet things used in worshipping deities. They are: milk, sugar, ghee, curd, and honey.

17. This is the hymn (to be recited) at the time of bathing the image of the deity. 'O god, I have devoutly offered you the smearing with sandal, agaru, camphor and saffron etc. With Lakṣmī, accept it.'

18. This is the hymn (to be recited) at the time of smearing (the image). 'O Nārāyaṇa, salutation to you, the protector (of me) from the ocean of hell. O you lord of the three worlds, I offer you two auspicious garments.'

19. This is the hymn (to be recited) at the time of (offering) the garments. 'O Dāmodara, my salutation to you. Protect me from the ocean of the worldly existence. I have offered you the sacred thread. O Puruṣottama, (please) accept it.'

20. This is the hymn (to be recited) at the time of (offering) the sacred thread. This is the hymn (to be recited) at the time of offering flowers.

21. 'O lord, I have offered you fragrant flowers like those of mālatī etc. O lord of gods, accept them with love.'

22. This is the hymn (to be recited) at the time of offering of eatables. 'O lord of gods, accept the betal nuts, the nāga-leaves along with camphor. (Please) accept the tāmbūla.'

23. This is the hymn (to be recited) at the time of offering a tāmbūla. Having devoutly offered incense, agaru mixed with guggula (a particular fragrant gum resin) he should offer the worship thus. He should use a lamp with (i.e. burning due to) ghee.

24-27. O best among sages, he, being controlled, should prepare various kinds of lamps in front of Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa in the vicinity of the Tulasī-grove, and should offer materials of worship to the god holding the disc. On the ninth he should offer the best materials of worship with a coconut for (obtaining) a son; on the tenth he should offer a citron fruit for the accomplishment of religious merit and sensual enjoyment. On the eleventh he should worship the twin deity with a pomegranate. (This would) always destroy his poverty.

28-29. Covering with a piece of cloth, a full plate of metal and a basket full of seven (kinds of) grains and betel nuts, he should offer it to the god to the accompaniment of this (i.e. the following) hymn. O Nārada, listen with a concentrated mind. 'O god, you, with Tulasī, (please) accept this material of worship

always accompanied by a conch, offered by me. O lord of gods, my salutation to you.'

30-35. This is the hymn (to be offered) at the time of offering materials of worship. Having thus worshipped Viṣṇu, the lord of gods, along with Lakṣmī, he should solicit the lord of gods for the fulfilment (of the vow). (He should say): 'O god, I, being free from sensual desires and anger, have fasted by means of this vow. O lord of gods, you alone are my refuge. O god Janārdana, let all that which in (i.e. while practising) this vow I have done (i.e. left) incomplete, be complete through your favour. Salutation to you, O lotus-eyed one; salutation to you who lie in water. O Keśava, through your favour I have practised the vow. O Keśava, O you who destroy the darkness of ignorance, being favourably disposed to me due to this vow, be one who would give me the sight of knowledge.' Then at night (he should) keep awake, should sing songs, read (religious) books along with those who know sounds and art of dancing and with very auspicious and meritorious accounts.

36-43. When it is daybreak, and when the bright sun has arisen, he should devoutly invite brāhmaṇas and offer a śrāddha in the manner of Viṣṇu's devotee. Having fed them, as they like, with sweetened milk and ghee, and having given them tāmbūlas, flowers, sandal etc. along with presents, so also sacred threads, garments, garlands and sandal, he should feed three (brāhmaṇa-)couples (and give them) garments, ornaments and saffron. He should also fill baskets according to his capacity with coconuts, cooked foods, garments and various kinds of fruits. He should make his preceptor and his wife put on the garments and divine ornaments (offered to them). He should worship (them) with sandal and flowers. He should also give a milch-cow along with articles of household use and with presents and garments. Listen to me who am telling you. All that religious merit which men obtain after bathing in all holy places is obtained by them through the favour of the lord of gods. Having enjoyed many pleasures and charming desired objects, he, through Viṣṇu's favour, obtains Viṣṇu's position in the end.

CHAPTER TWENTYSIX

Gift of Food Praised

Nārada said:

1. Tell me all that: Which things a man desirous of giving (gifts) to brāhmaṇas excellent in merit, should give in this world?

Mahādeva said:

2-6. Having known the truth in the world, listen, O you best among the divine sages. They praise food like this. Everything is settled in food. Therefore, men particularly desire to give food. There was no gift nor there will be a gift like food. The whole world consisting of the immobile and the mobile, is sustained by means of food. In the world food causes vigour. Life depends upon food only. A man desiring his own welfare, should even by troubling his family give eatable food to a magnanimous brāhmaṇa. O Nārada, he who would give food to a brāhmaṇa who asks for it and who is afflicted, is the best among the wise. He should look for his own well-being.

7-15. A wise man who is of a good character, who is free from jealousy, who, after abandoning his anger, gives food to a householder – a brāhmaṇa—who is tired, who is on the road (i.e. who is travelling), who has come at the time (of eating food), obtains happiness that is there in heaven and on the earth. He should not censure the guest. He should never hate him. He should offer food to a brāhmaṇa knowing the Vedas. That gift is superior. He who would give food to a brāhmaṇa who is tired, who is not seen before, and who is travelling, so also to him who is afflicted, would obtain full (merit of) righteousness. The religious merit of that man who would please the manes, gods, brāhmaṇas and guests with foods, is unlimited, O great sage. He who, even after having committed a very great sin, gives food to a suppliant, especially to a brāhmaṇa, is freed from sins. Gift given to brāhmaṇas is inexhaustible (in merit); (gift of) food to a śūdra gives a great fruit. Offering food to a śūdra and to a brāhmaṇa is superior (to any other gift). He should not ask (the brāhmaṇa about his) family, the school of the Vedas to which he belongs, or about his study (of the Vedas).

He should give food (thinking that) here is a brāhmaṇa that seeks (food), so also to a beggarly brāhmaṇa. For a man who gives food, auspicious trees full of the fruits of all desires, are (fruitful) in this world and in heaven he is full of joy.

16-21. O great sage, know those worlds which are (reached by him) by means of giving food. For the magnanimous ones (who give food) aeroplanes of many shapes and forms and endowed with (the fulfilment of) various desires, shine in heaven. (They enjoy) auspicious, golden wells and lakes everywhere. (They rejoice with) sounding vehicles and thousands of pearls. They see mountains full of food. There are (for them) garments and ornaments. There are (for them) rivers flowing with milk and mountains of ghee. There are (for them) palaces shining with white colour, beds bright like gold. They desire, therefore, to give food. So a man should give food. Those worlds are (reached) by the meritorious. Offering food gives great fruit. Therefore, in this world men should especially give food.

CHAPTER TWENTYSEVEN

Constructing Tanks, Planting Trees etc.

Mahādeva said:

1-8a. Giving water is the best (gift); it is always the best of the gifts. Therefore, a man should get constructed oblong reservoirs of water, wells and tanks. Wells dug for giving water destroy half the sin of a person of bad deeds, who is (later) always engrossed in good deeds. He from the reservoir of water dug by whom cows, brāhmaṇas, and good men always drink water, emancipates his family. (He too emancipates his family) in whose reservoir remains water in summer, which is never obtained in an inaccessible place and a place risky and difficult (to reach). I shall (now) tell you which are said to be the merits of the tanks that are constructed. He who has (constructed) a tank is honoured everywhere in the three worlds. The establishment of tanks is like a friendly house, increasing friends and

friendship, producing fame and the best. A tank, which is well-constructed in a country, in a sacred place, and which is a great resort, is, the wise say, the fruit of *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (worldly prosperity) and *kāma* (sensual enjoyment). (While constructing) a tank, one should have in view the four kinds of beings.

8b-18a. All the tanks lead to excellent virtue. Gods, men, gandharvas, manes, snakes, demons and immobile beings resort to a tank. He in whose tank there is water in the rainy season, gets the fruit of maintaining the sacred fire. There is no doubt about it. He in whose (tank) there is water in the winter season, obtains the fruit of (the gift of) a thousand cows. There is no doubt. If there is water in his tank in the spring and summer seasons, the wise say, (he gets) the fruit of the Atirātra and horse-sacrifice. Now listen to the merits of planting trees. He who plants them would emancipate both the families (of his father and of his mother), O great sage. Therefore, a man should plant trees. There is no doubt that these trees become (his) sons and grandsons. He too, when he dies, obtains inexhaustible worlds. The trees worship all the hosts of gods with flowers, the manes with leaves, and all guests with their shadow. Kinnaras, serpents, demons, gods, gandharvas, men, so also hosts of sages resort to trees. They, having flowers and fruits, gratify human beings in this world. Here and in the other world, they are the legal sons.

18b-26. Those brāhmaṇas who (construct) tanks, who plant trees and who have performed sacrifices, do not go away from heaven, so also others who tell the truth. Truth alone is the highest Brahman. Truth alone is the highest penance. Truth alone is the greatest sacrifice. Truth alone is the greatest knowledge. Truth is awake among gods; and truth is the highest position. Penance, sacrifices, religious merit, so also worship of deities and guests, the first precept, knowledge—all this is settled in truth. Truth is sacrifice; so also it is charity. It is the hymns. It is goddess Sarasvatī. Truth is practising a vow. Omkāra also is truth. Wind moves due to truth. The sun shines due to truth. Fire burns because of truth. Heaven exists on account of truth. Worship of all gods, bathing at all holy places, are said to be truth. (A truthful man) undoubtedly obtains everything in

the world. If a thousand horse sacrifices and truth are compared, truth certainly is superior to all (kinds of) sacrifices. Gods, manes and sages are pleased by means of truth. They say, truth is the highest duty. They say, truth is the highest position.

27-31. They say, truth is the supreme Brahman; therefore I am explaining truth to you. The sages who were devoted to truth, who were engrossed in practising truth, practised very severe penance, secured divine faculties, and from this world went to heaven in aeroplanes accompanied by beautiful celestial damsels. Always truth should be spoken. There is nothing superior to truth. Men with devoted minds should bathe in a deep, large, divine, holy place or a pure lake. That bath is said to be great. Those men who do not tell lies for their own sake, or for the sake of others, or for the sake of their sons, go to heaven. Vedas, sacrifices, also hymns always abide in brāhmaṇas. They do not become manifest in those who have abandoned truth. Therefore, a man should practise truth.

Nārada said:

32. Tell me specifically the fruit of austerities again.

Mahādeva said:

Of all the castes brāhmaṇas have the power of penance.

33-38. I shall explain to you the meditation with penance, which brings about (i.e. fulfils) all desires, and which is very difficult to practise for brāhmaṇas. Listen to me when I am telling it. Penance is said to be the highest. (A man) gets (his desired) fruit by means of penance. He who is always engrossed in penance, rejoices along with deities. (A man) obtains heaven by means of penance. Glory is obtained by means of penance. (A man) obtains salvation by means of penance. He gets a great (thing) by means of penance. Knowledge, proficiency, wealth, good fortune, (good) form—all this which a man desires mentally, he obtains. Those who have not practised penance never go to Brahmā's world. A man obtains (i.e. succeeds in) all that undertaking here and in the next world taking up which he practises penance. A man who is a drunkard, a man who cohabits with another's wife, a man who kills a

brāhmaṇa, a man who molests his preceptor's wife, crosses over all this (i.e. destroys sins due to these) by means of penance and is totally free.

39-46. Even the lord of gods Śiva, ancient Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Agni, Indra, and others who are endowed with penance, also eightysix thousand sages, abstaining from sexual intercourse, rejoice along with deities in heaven on account of penance By means of penance a kingdom is secured. Formerly Indra, the lord of all, protected all by means of penance and granted their request. The gods—the Sun and Moon—engaged in the welfare of the entire world, shine because of penance only; so also the stars and the planets. He, eating (i.e. subsisting on) wild roots and fruits in the forest, obtains everything and gets every pleasure through penance. O sage, he who first studies Vedas—that (study of the Vedas) is equal to penance. By reciting the chapter the best brāhmaṇa gets double the fruit of the religious merit which he gets by teaching it. O great sage, as the world is without light without the Moon and the Sun, so also (it is lightless) without Purāṇa. Therefore, it should be reflected upon. He who practised penance, has knowledge from sacred texts, enlightens the people.

47-59. Therefore, a preceptor is most venerable of all the worthy recipients (of gifts); the knower of Purāṇas is the best recipient. Since he saves (a man) from falling, he is called a *pātra* (i.e. a worthy recipient). Those who give wealth, grains, gold, and various garments to a worthy recipient go to (i.e. obtain) the best position. Listen to the fruit of him (i.e. which he gets) who gives cows, buffaloes, splendid elephants and horses to the chief (brāhmaṇa). He would obtain the fruit of the horse-sacrifice inexhaustible in all worlds. He who gives him (i.e. the brāhmaṇa reading the Purāṇa), a splendid (piece of) land that is tilled and fertile, emancipates ten preceding and ten succeeding members of his family; and in a divine aeroplane he goes to Viṣṇu's world. Gods are not so much pleased with sacrifices, with sprinklings (of water), with offerings, worships with flowers as they are with the books (of Purāṇas) being read. One who would arrange (the reading of) a religious book in the temple of Viṣṇu, or of the goddess, or of Śambhu, or of Gaṇeśa, so also of the Sun, obtains the fruit of a Rājasūya sacrifice or a horse-sacrifice. The reading of a book (containing stories from) Mahābhārata or Purāṇa is

excellent. He obtains all desired objects and breaks through the world of the Sun. Having broken through the Sun's world, he goes to the world of Brahmā; having lived there for hundreds of kalpas he becomes a king on the earth. He who would read Jaya (i.e. Mahābhārata) before a deity obtains the fruit which is declared to be the fruit of a thousand horse-sacrifices. Therefore, with all efforts, the auspicious reading of a book (containing stories) from Mahābhārata and Purāṇas should be done in Viṣṇu's temple. There is nothing else (except this) that delights Viṣṇu or other residents of heaven.

CHAPTER TWENTYEIGHT

Merit Coming From Exposition of a Sacred Text

Mahādeva said:

1-2. In this case also they relate an old historical account, a Purāṇa, which is highly meritorious, removes all sins, and is auspicious. O divine sage, Brahmā's son (Sanat-)Kumāra, having saluted the grandsire of the worlds, narrated this account to me.

Sanatkumāra said:

3-9a. I went to see Dharmarāja (i.e. Yama). With joy and great devotion he honoured me with words and asked me (to be seated) on a comfortable seat. I who was seated there, saw a great wonder: Dharma, the lord, himself hastily got up from his seat, O best among gods, on seeing a man who had come there in an aeroplane which was golden, the altar in which was made of lapis lazuli, which was beautiful due to gems and pearls, and was charming on account of a mass of small bells. Having taken him by his right hand, he honoured him with materials of worship. Dharma (i.e. Yama), the lord of gods, having smelt him on his head, and having seated him before him, and having honoured him said these words to him: "Welcome to you, O you who know what is right. I am pleased on seeing

you. Be (seated) near me; and give me some knowledge. You will again go to the place where Brahmā is settled."

9b-16. When this was said, another man, seated in an excellent aeroplane came to the place when the lord, Dharmarāja was (seated). He, while he was in the aeroplane (itself), was honoured (by Dharma) who bowed (to him) with respect; and he himself gently spoke to him as he had spoken to the former man. "What deed has he done due to which you are very much pleased? I have a curiosity about this since you yourself honoured him. Then with amazement you also honoured the other man. I think that the two have done auspicious deeds, as the best ones (came in) an aeroplane, and as you honour them for religious merit. Your religious merit is such that Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and others always worship you. Tell me, O omniscient one, which deed they did, due to which they obtained (this) divine fruit." Hearing those (words of me), he said to me: "Listen to the deed done by these two. O you very intelligent one, listen, due to having performed which worthy deed they have come here."

Dharma said:

17-23. There is on the earth a well-known city named Vaidiśa. A king known as Dharāpāla lived there. Formerly, some time, the goddess angrily cursed her attendant: "Since no other woman than me was married by my husband, you will turn into a jackal for twelve years." That jackal, thus addressed (by her), roamed on the surface of the earth. The Mountain's daughter (i.e. Pārvatī) had told him: "O son, the curse of (i.e. pronounced upon) you will come to an end at the well-known confluence of Vetasī and Vetravatī. He, having fasted there at the holy place, cast his life. Being turned into a divine form, he went into the proximity of Viṣṇu. King Dharāpāla, seeing the great wonder there constructed a Viṣṇu temple and then cast his life at the holy place. Being turned into a divine form he installed (the image) of that lord in that city, and appointed all men to look after him (i.e. the image).

24-33a. The auspicious temple of Viṣṇu in that town is always full of (i.e. crowded with) people. The very intelligent king, full of modesty, having honoured the host of brāhmaṇas,

and especially the (public) reader of Mahābhārata and Purāṇa, who was the best among the brāhmaṇas and greatest due to his learning, so also having worshipped the book (i.e. the Purāṇa text) in due order with flowers etc., said to the reader: "This temple of Viṣṇu before you is constructed (by me). O best brāhmaṇa, this multitude of people of the four castes desiring to listen to it, is (present) here. (Please) read the book (i.e. the Purāṇa text) for one year after taking (money for) excellent livelihood. After that I shall (also) give you another hundred golden niṣkas after the year is over for my well-being, O best brāhmaṇa." Thus he started there the reading of the book. O best sage, after the year was over, and due to the shortening of his life, he went to Kāladharma (i.e. to Yama). Viṣṇu and I sent his aeroplane (i.e. the aeroplane for him) from heaven. This is the fruit of the deeds. He had heard the auspicious, great Padma Purāṇa, entitled 'an account', which is auspicious, pure, and which destroys sins. All gods are not so much pleased with offerings like those of sandal and flowers as they are with the listening to the Purāṇa.

33b-42. All gods will not be so much gratified with all the gifts of objects like gold and jewels or of garments or of villages and towns, as by listening to the religious discourse. O best sage, I have also in the same way a great love for listening to historical accounts (i.e. Mahābhārata) and Purāṇa, which brings about (i.e. fulfils) all desires. O best sage, I very much like the giving of the daughter (in marriage). But I do not like it so much as the reading of a book (i.e. a Purāṇa-text). What is the use of talking much? Nothing else gives me joy except the auspicious account. This is declared to be a secret. O brāhmaṇa, the other best man that had come here, had come due to company. Having listened to a religious text with faith, devotion is created (in his mind) for the highest soul. O best sage, this brāhmaṇa, having gone round the magnanimous reader (of the Purāṇa) keeping him to his right, gave him a māṣaka of gold. Due to his mind overpowered by grief he did not make any other gift at any time. But there is no doubt that he got the fruit due to his having made a gift to a worthy recipient. O great sage, I have told (you) this deed of the two.

Mahādeva said:

43. Those wise men who listen to the greatness of this religious merit never face a calamity in existence after existence.

CHAPTER TWENTYNINE

The Importance of Gopīcandana

Mahādeva said:

1-13a. Now I shall tell you something else: the importance of (the sandal called) gopīcandana as I saw and heard about it, O best divine sage. A brāhmaṇa, or a vaiśya, or a śūdra, whose body is smeared with gopīcandana is free from the sin of killing a brāhmaṇa. There is no doubt that he who puts a mark of gopīcandana (on his body) is free from the sins like drinking etc. A Viṣṇu's devotee, exclusively devoted to Viṣṇu, with his body smeared with gopīcandana, is free from all sins; so also (he is free from sins) due to the water of Gaṅgā. A śūdra or a brāhmaṇa who has killed a brāhmaṇa, or who is a drunkard, so also (a brāhmaṇa) who has stolen gold, who has molested his preceptor's wife, is instantly freed from sins committed during hundreds of existences. Twelve marks are prescribed for all devotees of Viṣṇu; they should be put especially by brāhmaṇas (who are Viṣṇu's devotees) and who desire welfare. It should be of the form of a staff on the forehead; of the form of a lotus on the chest. (It should be) like (the form of) a reed-leaf on the shoulder-blade. The other one should be like the form of a lamp. On the right shoulder-blade there should be four marks like those of wheel above and two ring-like marks below. One of the two (should be of the form of) a conch. He should have two (marks) in the middle, so also on the sides. On the left (shoulder-blade there should also be) a mark of a disc and (marks of) two maces (drawn) separately. On the forehead (there should be the mark of) a mace, so also of a seal-ring on the chest. There should be three beautiful marks and two (marks

of) conches in the middle. On the chest, on the side above the breast, (there should be the marks of) a mace and lotuses as on the arms. At the root of the ear there should be three or four (marks of discs) and two below (it). He should put one (mark) out of other marks.

13b-21a. Following the wise he should put on the mark of his sect. He should put it as he likes, since there is no rule about it. By means of just putting a mark (all) upto a cāṇḍāla are purified. I look upon the reviler of the devotees of Viṣṇu as a greater (sinner) than a cāṇḍāla. He (i.e. a cāṇḍāla) should be looked upon like Viṣṇu. No doubt should be raised in this matter. None (else) should be known to be similar to a brāhmaṇa who is Viṣṇu's devotee and who is devoted to the meditation on Viṣṇu. He would (himself) be Viṣṇu in the world. A brāhmaṇa having (the marks of) a conch and a disc (on his body), and devoted to the study of the Vedas, is (alone) said to be Viṣṇu in the Veda. A brāhmaṇa who has the mark of (i.e. made with) a disc, purifies those brāhmaṇas who purify by their presence the persons who sit in the same row to dine with them. He who is devoted to him is freed from great sins, O brāhmaṇa. There is no doubt that a brāhmaṇa, after having worn the garland of Tulasī-wood, would enjoy salvation. Since a brāhmaṇa is of the form of Viṣṇu, he is said to be Viṣṇu's devotee in this world. He who has a mark of gopīcandana (on his body) at the time of his death gets into an aeroplane and goes to the highest position of Viṣṇu.

21b-26. O Nārada, I shall tell you that those best men who put on the mark of gopīcandana never meet with a calamity. A man who puts (the mark of) a conch and (that of) a disc on his right hand and particularly on the left hand also is freed from great sins. There is no doubt that those who are seen to have indulged in drinking, to have killed women and children, to have practised illicit intercourse, get freed just on seeing the devotees (of Viṣṇu), O brāhmaṇa. How can (one find) devotees of Viṣṇu in this mundane existence of little worth? I have surely become a devotee of Viṣṇu through the favour of Viṣṇu's devotion. There is no doubt that dwelling here in Kāśī and muttering 'Rāma, Rāma', he becomes Śiva due to the contact with that religious merit.

CHAPTER THIRTY

The Greatness of the Vow of Lamp

Nārada said:

1-2. O Śiva, tell me the importance of the vow, the best among all vows, the excellent rite of the lamp called Saṁvatsara, by (doing) which all other vows are undoubtedly practised, all desires are satisfied and all sin would perish.

Mahādeva said :

3-8a. O divine sage, I shall tell you the secret which destroys sins, and listening to which he who has killed a brāhmaṇa, or a cow or a friend, (so also) he who has molested his preceptor's wife, who has been a traitor, who has been cruel, obtains eternal salvation, and having emancipated a hundred families goes to Viṣṇu's world. I shall (now) tell (you) that excellent vow of the lamp lasting for a year, so also the mode of practising it and its greatness. On the auspicious eleventh day of the first month of Mārgaśīrṣa, a man, free from anger and having restrained himself, should, after having got up in the early part of the day, bathe at the holy places on the confluence of rivers or in tanks and rivers or in his (own) house.

8b-10. (He should then recite this hymn:) 'I have taken bath at all the sacred places. Always give me that bath (only).' This is the hymn to be recited at the time of bathing. He, having gratified gods and men, having muttered (the hymns) and with his senses controlled, should worship the lord, the god Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa. Having bathed (the image of the deity) with pañcāmṛta and then with sandal and water (he should say): 'God of gods, O lord of the world, you have bathed with Lakṣmī. Emancipate me, O chief of gods, from this fearful bondage of the worldly existence.'

11-15. After that he should devoutly worship Viṣṇu with Lakṣmī by means of Vaidika, so also Paurāṇic hymns. (Then) with the words: 'Therefore, O god, sandal etc. (is offered)' or with the man-composed (hymn like) 'Salutation to Matsya (i.e. the Fish-incarnation), to god, to Kūrmadeva (i.e. the the Tortoise-incarnation), Varāhadeva (i.e. the Boar-incarnation), to Narasiṁha-

deva (i.e. to the Narasiṁha-incarnation), to Buddhadeva, so also salutation to Kalki' he should worship (the lord). 'Salutation to god Rāma, to you god Viṣṇu; salutation to you the soul of all', with this he should worship his head. There are (also other) names like Keśava etc. He may worship Viṣṇu with them. 'O god of gods, this is the divine sap. It is fragrant and has perfume and is pure. This is incense. Salutation to you. Accept it'.

16-17. This is the hymn to be recited at the time of offering incense. 'The lamp destroys darkness. The lamp gives lustre. Therefore, may Viṣṇu be pleased by this offering of the lamp.' This is the hymn to be recited at the time of offering the lamp. 'O god of gods, O lord of the world, this is an offering of eatables like food etc. Along with Lakṣmī accept it which is the excellent and best nectar.'

18-19. This is the hymn to be recited at the time of offering eatables. Having thus meditated upon Viṣṇu, and having taken water with a fruit, his hand or a conch, he should then devoutly offer materials of worship. 'May all that sin which I committed during a thousand existences, perish due to your favour, O Viṣṇu.'

20-24. This is the hymn to be recited at the time of offering materials of worship. Then in front of Lakṣmī and Viṣṇu he should take a new white pitcher full of ghee or oil. On it he should put a vessel made of copper or of clay. In that vessel he should offer a wick having nine threads. Having put the pitcher very steadily, he should light the lamp. Then being pure and having worshipped the deity, he should resolve with (the recital of) this hymn in chambers having no breeze, O divine sage: 'This Kāma (i.e. Cupid) shines as the only emperor of what there was and what there will be. I have employed this lamp for a year. O Viṣṇu, may the unceasing sacred fire please you.'

25-28a. Then having curbed his senses and being intent on sacred knowledge, he should not talk to sinful and heretical persons. At night he should keep awake, should have songs and (should keep awake) with dancing, musical instruments etc., so also auspicious texts, various accounts and fasts. Then in the morning, after having performed the rites of the morning, he should devoutly feed brāhmaṇas and worship them according to

his capacity. Having himself broken the fast, he should salute them and dismiss them.

28b-31a. In this way (he should be) of a firm vow for day and night. The lamp should be of (the weight of) one pala of gold or half of it. The wick is said to be made of silver. It should be of the weight of two palas, or more than that by half a pala. A devout man, desiring the gate to salvation, should prepare the pitcher full of ghee and along with the copper vessel; so also he should fashion with gold (the image of) the deity Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa according to his capacity.

31b-36a. Then the wise one should invite best brāhmaṇas. The best alternative is (to invite) twelve (brāhmaṇas). As the middle alternative (he should invite) six (brāhmaṇas). Or he should employ three or (even) one brāhmaṇa who would perform the rite (for him). Having honoured a brāhmaṇa with his wife, who is calm, who performs rites, who especially knows historical accounts and Purāṇas, who is conversant with religion, and having worshipped devoutly Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa as before with the lamp-wicks placed in the copper-vessel and with the pitcher full of ghee, he should give (these things) to a brāhmaṇa after having meditated upon the highest Viṣṇu to the accompaniment of this hymn, O divine sage.

36b-39. I (shall) tell you the hymn: 'O sinless one, I have offered this lamp, since it destroys sins in this mundane existence pervaded by the darkness of ignorance, since it gives knowledge and gives salvation.' This is the hymn (to be recited at the time of offering) the lamp. Having given presents with devotion to the brāhmaṇa, he should then feed the brāhmaṇas with ghee, sweetened milk and sweetmeats. Then he should cover the brāhmaṇa with his wife with garments, and should give him a bed with furniture and a cow with a calf.

40-45. He should give them presents according to his wealth. Similarly he should honour his friends, kinsmen and relatives. Thus he should celebrate a great festival at the time of the end of the vow of the lamp. Then he should dismiss (the deity) and having saluted (it) he should apologise. Men, when they do thus, obtain that fruit—that religious merit—of the lamp maintained for a year which they would get by the Saṁkrānti-rites. By means of observing the vow of the lamp maintained for a year

men get the same religious merit as is obtained by monthly rites. When the lamp is maintained for a year, a man gets that fruit which he obtains by vows of giving gifts and vows of abstract meditation, according to their number.

46-47. A man who offers a lamp to the deity gets the same fruit which a learned man would obtain by means of gifts of cows, land, gold and especially of houses. The giver of a lamp gets brilliance; the giver of a lamp gets inexhaustible wealth; the giver of a lamp obtains knowledge; the giver of a lamp gets supreme happiness. There is no doubt that by offering a lamp a man secures good fortune, very pure knowledge, health and great prosperity.

48-49. A man who offers a lamp would obtain a lovely wife having all (auspicious) marks, sons, grandsons, great-grandsons, and undying progeny. A brāhmaṇa (who offers a lamp) would obtain great knowledge, a kṣatriya (who offers a lamp) would obtain excellent kingdom, a vaiśya (offering a lamp would obtain) all (kinds of) wealth and beasts, and a śūdra (offering a lamp would obtain) happiness.

50-55a. A maiden (offering a lamp) obtains a husband endowed with all (auspicious) marks, a long life, and many sons and grandsons. A young woman (offering a lamp) will never experience widowhood. She does not get (i.e. suffer from) separation (from her husband) due to the prowess of the gift of a lamp. Maladies and diseases do not take place due to the gift of a lamp. A man who is frightened, becomes free from fear, and one that is bound gets freed from the bondage. There is no doubt that one devoted to the vow of (offering) a lamp is freed from the sins of (i.e. due to) the murder of a brāhmaṇa etc., for there is the statement of Brahmā to this effect.

55b-61. He who has constantly kept burning a lamp before Viṣṇu, has undoubtedly practised the vows like Cāndrāyaṇa and Kṛcchra. Those who having worshipped Viṣṇu, maintained the lamp for a year, are blessed, are magnanimous, and have obtained the fruit of their existence. Those also who see the wick of the lamp here, go to the highest place, difficult to be obtained even by gods; and those who put, according to their capacity, oil and wick into the lamp, go to the highest position. Those also who are unable to light the lamp that is going out, and inform

others, enjoy the same fruit. He too who begging little oil only for (maintaining) the lamp, keeps the lamp for Viṣṇu, also obtains religious merit. (Even) a mean man who sees the lamp being lighted, and has the palms of his hands joined (in honour) of Viṣṇu, would obtain (i.e. go to) Viṣṇu's world.

62-63. He who would give an idea (to others) to light a lamp (in honour of Viṣṇu), (or) he who himself would do so, is free from all sins, and would obtain (i.e. go to) Viṣṇu's world. In this case also they narrate an ancient account, merely by hearing which a man is free from all sins.

64-72. On the charming bank of Sarasvatī there was (a hermitage) known as Siddhāśrama. Formerly a brāhmaṇa named Kapila, a knower of the Vedas, lived there. He was engrossed in (the practice of) vows and fasts. He was poor and was learned. He maintained his family by begging. He propitiated Viṣṇu by means of vows, fasts and restraints. Having duly worshipped Viṣṇu, he always lighted the lamp. Having taken oil, having worshipped Viṣṇu in his own house, he would light the lamp with great devotion for pleasing Viṣṇu. When (that) magnanimous Kapila was getting along like this, a cat with sharp teeth would always eat mice. He (i.e. the cat) came there day and night to eat mice. He always remained meditating for getting a prey in front of (the image of) Viṣṇu. He ate many mice in the house of the brāhmaṇa. Intent upon meditation, he would eat those mice that came there to (drink) the oil and to take away the wick. When this was going on like this, after some time had elapsed, that pure brāhmaṇa Kapila along with his wife fasted and worshipped Viṣṇu in his house on an Ekādaśī (day).

73-81. Engaged in praising (Viṣṇu) and dancing (in front of his image) he kept awake. When it was midnight, the brāhmaṇa was overcome with sleep. The cat having sharp teeth and going quickly came there; and always remaining in a corner of the house he ate up the eatables offered to the deity. He saw a small female mouse that had come there to drink the oil, and that was used to take away the wick in the dim light. He jumped and attacked her with his foot. Then she entered a hole. Due to (the contact with) her foot the lamp became very bright. The oil-pot was bent and there was good light. The brāhmaṇa too abandoning his stupefying sleep got up. The cat that ate mice,

also kept awake during that night. Then when it had dawned, the brāhmaṇa, having performed his daily rites, broke the fast along with his relatives. That magnanimous Kapila who was going along like this had sons and grandsons. He obtained wealth, grains, excellent health, great prosperity and abundant riches. Having broken through the auspicious orb of the sun, so also of the moon, Kapila came to (secure) salvation through the prowess of the vow of the lamp.

82-84. He got joined (i.e. he merged) in the form of a lustre into the highest soul. The female mouse also died in the hole in (course of) time. Getting into an excellent aeroplane, she went to the world of Viṣṇu. The cat too died after (some) time and went to heaven. Having got into an excellent aeroplane waited upon and surrounded by celestial nymphs, accompanied by hosts of vidyādharas, being praised with auspicious cries of victory by serpents he went to the world of Viṣṇu.

85-91a. Having enjoyed many pleasures for thousands of crores of kalpas and hundreds of crores of kalpas he became a king on the earth by name Sudharman who was religious-minded, who worshipped gods and brāhmaṇas, who was handsome, who was fortunate and who was very mighty and brave. His wife, most dear to him, was endowed with all (auspicious) marks, was devoted to her husband, and was of a good character. Her name was Rūpasundarī. She was the most beautiful among all ladies. Many sons and many daughters were born (to them). When the couple was thus enjoying (in each other's company) with love, the month of Kārtika opening Viṣṇu's eyes (i.e. making him awake) arrived. During that (month) lamps are lighted by those who are devoted to Viṣṇu. So also those devotees of Viṣṇu who are afraid of the worldly existence practise vows like Kṛcchra and Cāndrāyaṇa and restraints.

91b-94. When the Prabodhinī (Ekādaśī) arrived, the king said to the queen: "O good one, in the lotus from the navel of Viṣṇu it is the auspicious Prabodhinī. With my senses controlled through fast, I shall today worship (Viṣṇu). Having bathed in the holy place of Puṣkara, I shall worship the imperishable lord of gods having lotus-like eyes, along with Lakṣmī." Having heard these desired words, she who was engaged in the well-

being of her husband and who smiled charmingly, said (these) secret words to her husband:

Rūpasundarī said:

95-100a. O king, desire is also produced in my heart. I too have a desire for form and beauty. I desire to go with you to the best sacred place, Puṣkara.

Then the king, along with her, and with groups of elephants, horses and chariots and with family-priests came to Puṣkara. Then having bathed (there) he, meditating (on Viṣṇu) and gratifying manes and deities, worshipped the imperishable lord of gods, the lotus-eyed (Viṣṇu). There, in the very charming temple, full of rows of lights everywhere, he saw the cat drawn (in a picture). Seeing that, the king remembering his former deeds and existence, looked at the lotus-like face of his beloved, and smiled.

Rūpasundarī said:

100b-101a. O lord, why did you smile after looking at my face?

Seeing the fruit of his former deed, he said (to her):

The king said:

101b-103. O queen, formerly (i.e. in the previous existence) I was a cat in the house of a brāhmaṇa. There I ate hundreds and thousands of mice. Since, even under a pretext, I guarded the lamp in front of Viṣṇu, I got, O Queen, fruit of that deed. Having reached Viṣṇu's world, I have now obtained the kingdom.

Rūpasundarī said:

104-108. I too had the recollection of my former deeds and existence. I too was a small female mouse in the house of the brāhmaṇa. On the Prabodhinī (Ekādaśī) in Kārtika, when the light had become dim, I went out of the hole to snatch the wick. Seeing (the image of) the god Viṣṇu worshipped with flowers, and the brāhmaṇa overcome with sleep, I then dragged the wick. When you, taking an opportunity to seize me, got up, I

saw you and ran into the hole. With the foot of me who was entering (the hole) the wick of the lamp spread out, the oil-pot also bent down and I was happy.

109-115. O lord of great kings, since I brightened the lamp at that time, I have now secured excellent beauty; you are my husband, (I have obtained) kingdom, sons and (great) happiness like that. Due to my brightening the lamp I secured knowledge which is extremely difficult to obtain. Therefore, with all efforts and with great devotion, we have especially practised the vow of the lamp. So we have received the fruit of the deed, viz. the riches like the kingdom etc. We remembered our former existence and so also all our sins have perished. Therefore, men have practised with all efforts and proper rites and hymns the vow of the lamp which is auspicious and resembles the Sun, the Moon and stars.

Hearing this, O divine sage, the king full of faith properly practised the vow of the lamp with his wife. Having practised the vow of the lamp at the holy palce of Puṣkara, the two obtained the great salvation difficult to be obtained by gods and demons.

116-120. Those men who on the earth listen to this greatness (of the vow) of the lamp, are free from all sins, and go to Viṣṇu's abode. And those men or those women who being intent upon it, devoutly practise it are all free from sins and go to ancient Brahman. O learned one, I have told you about this vow of the lamp which gives salvation, which gives all happiness, which is virtuous, and which is a great vow. Diseases of the eye, so also maladies and (other) diseases of the body perish in a moment, when it is practised. O brāhmaṇa, there is no poverty, no grief, no delusion, no illusion. Prosperity comes to the house in every existence.

CHAPTER THIRTYONE

The Vow of Janmāṣṭamī

Nārada Said:

1. O god of gods, O lord of the world, O you who grant fearlessness to your devotees, having favoured me tell me about the vow (of Janmāṣṭamī), O Mahādeva.

Śrī Mahādeva said:

2-12a. Formerly there was king Hariścandra who was a sovereign emperor. Brahmā pleased with him gave him an auspicious city which satisfied all desires, which was full of all gems, which was divine and lustrous like the young sun. Having stayed in it, the king righteously protected the earth with seven islands, as a father protects his legitimate son. The king having great wealth and corn, and having sons and daughters, and being very proud protected that auspicious kingdom. Nobody before (him) had such a kingdom anywhere (in the world). No other men also ever got into such an aeroplane (as he did). 'Of which act (of mine) is this the fruit that I am (enjoying) like the lord of gods?' Being engrossed in thinking like this, the excellent king seated in an excellent aeroplane saw the Meru, the best of mountains. The magnanimous one, as it were the other sun, was there. The king, having seen on the excellent mountain, on the golden strip of the mountain, Sanatkumāra, the brāhmaṇic sage, exclusively devoted to abstract meditation, got down with a desire to ask him about the wonder. Being delighted, he saluted his feet. He too greeted him. The king, who was seated comfortably, asked the best sage: "O lord, the wealth like the one that I possess, is difficult to obtain in the world. Due to which deed would it be obtained? Who was I in the former existence? If I deserve favour from you then tell me the truth."

Sanatkumāra said:

12b-20. O king, listen. I shall tell you the cause of your former behaviour, having practised which you were specially favoured. In your previous existence you were a good, pure vaiśya who spoke the truth. You gave up your duty; therefore

you were abandoned by your kinsmen. That you (i.e. you reduced to that condition), weak (i.e. unable) to maintain yourself, abandoned your relatives and went out, followed by your wife, to serve someone. But at that time (every man) was oppressed by famine, (so) nobody gave you a job. Then in a forest you saw a lake with the lotuses blooming. Then you had a thought: 'Let us take the lotuses.' Saying so, and taking them at every step they resorted to in the auspicious, meritorious city named Vārāṇasī. Then nobody purchased the lotuses. Somebody went out from the temple and stood in the courtyard. Entering that place he heard the sound of musical instruments. 'In which place (i.e. from which place) is the sound of the musical instruments being heard?' When he asked like this and was told that it was the sound from a musical instrument, he went ahead a (little) distance. There was king Indradyumna, the well-known king of Kāśī.

21-30. His well-known daughter was Candrāvatī by name, who was virtuous. The noble one had fasted on the auspicious day—the eighth day (of the month)—the day of the birth anniversary (of Kṛṣṇa). That vaiśya came there where she, the one, remained. His mind was pleased, and great joy came there. At that place you saw the sacred rite in honour of the deity, where lord Viṣṇu is worshipped along with the Sun. You and your wife worshipped him devoutly with flowers. The other made a heap of flowers there. Seeing that she, who was amazed, said: "Oh, who has made this worship?" Knowing all her act you also had protected all that. Then, she, being pleased, gave you much wealth. You did not accept the wealth. You were invited to a meal. You did not take the wealth or the meal at that time. The Sun, along with Viṣṇu, was duly worshipped. Then in the morning, you, always being looked after by her, having produced familiarity with them all, went out as you liked. This (then) is the good deed done by you in the previous existence. According to (the fruit of) your deeds, you died. Due to that great religious merit, an aeroplane came at that time. O king, you are enjoying the fruit of the deed which you did in the former existence.

Hariścandra said:

31. If I deserve to be favoured by you then tell me in what manner and in which month that day (of Aṣṭamī) is to be celebrated.

Sanatkumāra said:

32-40. Listen attentively, O king, to what is being told to you by me. If in the month of Śrāvaṇa on the eighth of the dark half Rohiṇī is seen (in the sky) then that day is named Jayantī (day). O great king, it would be the cause for existence again and again. I shall narrate to you the manner of (observing) it as I was told by Brahmā, doing (i.e. observing) which a man being free from sins, goes to Viṣṇu's world. Then having fasted and then bathed with (water) with black sesamum-seeds, he should instal a scratchless pitcher with five jewels. Kātyāyana said that these five jewels, viz. diamonds, pearls, lapis lazuli, topaz and sapphires are recommended. On it he should place a golden pot with (auspicious) marks. In it he should place the golden (image of) Yaśodā, Nanda's wife, giving a suck to her son and with a smile on her face. As his capacity is (i.e. permits), he should get fashioned a golden (image of the) god, sucking one breast of the mother, and touching the other with his hand, and looking at the mother with love and pleasing her again and again. If he has the capacity he should have the image (weighing) just two niṣkas, or of iron (weighing) three (niṣkas) or of gold also.

41-45. In the same way, he should fashion a golden (image of) Rohiṇī and a silver one of the Moon. The (image of the) Moon should be of the size of a thumb only, and (that of) Rohiṇī (should be of the size of) four fingers. He should place ear-rings on the ears and a neck ornament round the neck (of the image). Having done so, he should bathe (the image of) Viṣṇu (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) along with (that of) his mother with milk etc. and smear them with sandal. He should cover (the image) with a white garment, and decorate it with garlands of flowers. Along with offerings of eatables and various varieties of fruits, he should put a lamp there decorated with an arbour of flowers. The devoted one should make the wise ones sing, dance and

play on musical instruments. Having done the rite according to his wealth, he should worship his teacher and should then bring the worship to an end.

CHAPTER THIRTYTWO

A Gift of Land Is the Best

Mahādeva said:

1-9. Seeing the Śatakratu completed and accomplished with excellent presents, Indra, in whose mind a thought had arisen, asked Bṛhaspati: "O you glorious one, O you of a great penance, tell me about that inexhaustible and very valuable gift by means of which a man gets happinsss everywhere." Thus addressed by Indra, that family priest (of the gods), the god of gods and the very wise Bṛhaspati said: "O Indra, he who gives the gift of gold, or of a cow, or of (a piece of) land, becomes free from all sins. All (this) viz. gold, silver, a garment, a gem, a jewel would be (said to be) given by him who gives (a piece of) land. By giving land that is tilled with a plough, that contains seeds and is shining with corn, a man is honoured in heaven as long as there is the light cast by the sun. That sin, whichever a man overpowered by his livelihood commits, is purified by the gift of land of the measure of a *gocarma*. *Daṇḍa* is of the measure of ten cubits. Thirty daṇḍas make a *vartana*. Ten such (vartanas) make a *gocarma*. This is the definition of *brahmagocarma*. That land where a thousand cows that have calved young calves and that are with bulls, remain uncontrolled, is known as *gocarma*.

10-14. He should give it to a brāhmaṇa endowed with virtues, possessing penance, and with his senses controlled. He would get its infinite fruit as long as the earth begirt by the ocean remains. As a drop of oil fallen into water spreads, in the same way, O Indra, the gift of (a piece of) land spreads in every grain. As the seeds scattered on the earth grow, similarly the desires accompanied by the gift of land, grow (i.e. become fruitful). The givers of food are always happy. One who gives a

garment would be handsome. That man who gives (a piece of) land repeatedly gives all.

15-17. O Indra, as a milch-cow feeds her calf by sending out milk, in the same way the land that is given (to a brāhmaṇa) feeds the giver of it. A conch, an auspicious seat, an umbrella, excellent horses and fine elephants (*obscure*). The fruit of the religious merit of the gift of land is heaven, O Indra. The Sun, Varuṇa, Fire, Brahmā, the Moon, Hutāśana (i.e. fire), the lord with the trident in his hand greet the giver of land. His manes clap (with delight) and the grandsires describe (his gift), 'In our family the giver of land is born. He will emancipate us.'

18-20. The three are said to be superior gifts: cows, land and knowledge. These lift (a man) from hell by means of muttering, sowing seed and milking. O brāhmaṇa, if they are taken up by the learned they help to cross a calamity. Those that give garments, go (to heaven with their bodies) covered. Those who do not give garments go naked. The givers of food go with gratification. Those who do not give food go hungry.

21-25a. All the manes frightened due to the fear of (falling into) hell say: 'That (our) son who will go to Gayā will be our emancipator.' Many sons should be desired, so that at least one of them would go to Gayā. He would perform the horse-sacrifice, or would give a 'nīla' bull. That bull which is red in colour, whitish at the tip of its tail, white at the hoofs and tail, is called 'nīla'. By means of the water which the 'nīla' bull, of a whitish tail, splashes, the manes are gratified for sixty thousand years; and by means of the mud which is on the horns, the family is emancipated; and his manes obtain (i.e. go to) the very bright world of Soma (i.e. the Moon).

25b-30a. It was (reached) by king Dilīpa, Nṛga and Nahuṣa; but none of the other kings reached it. Many kings like Sagara, gave (the gift of) land. Whenever he gave (the gift of) land he got its fruit (just) then. That (gift of land) destroys the sin (of one) who kills a brāhmaṇa, who murders a woman, who kills a child, who is fallen, or the killer of thousands of cows. He who takes away the land given by him or by someone else, becomes an insect in the feces, and is roasted along with his manes. The giver of land remains in heaven for sixty thousand years; and the one who strikes him (soliciting land) and who consents to (the

suppliant being struck) would go to (and live in) hell for that much period.

30b-37. None else is more meritorious or a greater sinner than the giver of land or the snatcher of it (respectively). They remain above (i.e. in heaven) and below (in hell) till the deluge. The first child of Fire is gold; the earth is (the child) of Viṣṇu; the cows are the Sun's daughters. He would obtain an unending fruit of (these gifts); so also he who would give gold, or a cow or (a piece of) land. He who receives (a piece of) land, he who gives it, both are meritorious, and certainly go to heaven. Those who snatch (a piece of) land or those who have caused (others) to snatch it unjustly would destroy their family (upto) the seventh member (i.e. descendant). He, a dull one and covered by (i.e. full of) ignorance, who snatches or causes someone else to snatch (a piece of land), is bound by the nooses of Varuṇa and is born in the stocks of lower animals. The gifts are censured along with the tears that are shed. The family up to three descendants perishes when the land of a brāhmaṇa is taken away. One who snatches (a piece of) land is not purified (even) by (digging) a thousand wells and tanks, or by performing a hundred horse-sacrifices, or by giving a crore of cows.

38-39. Whatever good deed is done, whatever gift is given, whatever penance is practised, whatever study is done, whatever is meritorious perishes by taking away (the portion of) the border (of a piece of land) of the measure of half a finger. He who oppresses (i.e. snatches) a (pasture)—a sacred land of cows, (a portion of) the road in the village, or (a portion of) cremation ground goes to hell (and remains there) till deluge.

40-44. A man kills five (members of his family) if he tells a lie with regard to his daughter, kills ten if he lies about a cow, kills a hundred if he tells a lie about a horse, and (kills) a thousand by telling a lie about a man. The liar with regard to gold kills those that are born and those that are not (i.e. are yet to be) born. He kills (i.e. destroys) everything by lying about land. (Therefore) do not tell a lie pertaining to land. Even if the life is on the point of departing, a man should not show interest in a brāhmaṇa's wealth. Those that are (duly) burnt with fire (after their death) go up. The one who is burnt by (the curse of) a brāhmaṇa, does not go up. Those who are burnt by fire, go up;

so also those who are scorched up by the sun; so also those who are struck by the sceptre of the king or by the curse of a brāhmaṇa. The limbs nourished by a brāhmaṇa's wealth, repeatedly waste away as the heat wastes away due to sand.

45-49a. A man who snatches the wealth of a brāhmaṇa goes to (the) Raurava (hell). Poison is not called poison; (but) a brāhmaṇa's wealth is called poison. Poison kills one(only), (but snatching) a brāhmaṇa's wealth kills one's sons and grandsons. A man may digest iron-powder, or stone-powder, or (even) poison. But which man will digest a brāhmaṇa's wealth in the three worlds? That wealth which through (snatching of) a brāhmaṇa's wealth gives happiness or which through (snatching away) the wealth belonging to (the temple of) a deity gives joy, leads to the destruction of the family and to that of oneself. A brāhmaṇa's wealth, the murder of a brāhmaṇa, the wealth of a poor man, the gold of the preceptor or friend would trouble a man even while (he is) living in heaven.

49b-53a. O best god, that (wealth) which is given to a brāhmaṇa who is contented, who is modest, who is accompanied by the essence of everything, who is endowed with Vedic studies, penance, knowledge and control of senses, is inexhaustible. As milk, curd, ghee or honey put in an unbaked pot splits due to the weakness of the pot, but the pot does not perish, similarly, an ignorant man who receives a cow, gold, a garment, food, land and sesamum-seeds, becomes reduced to ash like wood.

53b-61a. He who would construct a new lake or would get an old one dug up, emancipates his entire family and is honoured in heaven. Wells, tanks, lakes or (trees etc.) growing in gardens, if improved again, give a pearl-like fruit. O Indra, he who has water (to give to others) in (even) the summer season, would never meet with a difficulty, a danger or an evil. O best god, water remaining on the earth (even) for a day, would emancipate seven members preceding (and succeeding) him. The man (offering a lamp) would be of a strong body by means of the light of the lamp. By giving presents he obtains memory and intelligence. He who, even after having done a sinful act, would give to a deserving person, especially a brāhmaṇa. is not smeared with sins. He who does not report when (a piece of) land, cows, or a servant are forcibly snatched is called the killer of a brāh-

maṇa. He who, when a marriage is about to take place, or at the time of a sacrifice or gift, creates obstacle through delusion, becomes an insect after death.

61b-71. Wealth becomes fruitful by giving (a portion of it); life becomes fruitful by saving (another) life. Harmlessness gets (as) its fruit handsomeness, prosperity and good health. A man gets (the fruit of) worship by eating fruits and roots. Heaven is obtained through truthfulness. Due to fasting oneself unto death one gets kingdom and obtains happiness everywhere. O Indra, an embodied one who roams about as a religious mendicant, who goes on well while in initiation, who bathes thrice a day, drinks (i.e. inhales) air (only) obtains the (fruit of a) sacrifice. He should bathe every day, be diligent and be endowed with the sandhyā (prayer), Vedas and muttering. The harmless one goes to splendour, the indestructible heaven. One who enters fire is certainly honoured in Brahmā's world. By giving up tastes he obtains beasts and sons. He who fasts, lives in heaven for a long time. He who always sleeps on the (bare) ground, obtains desired position. He who takes up the posture of the brave, who sleeps like a brave man and occupies the position of a brave man has all inexhaustible worlds reached according to his desire. O Indra, having observed a fast, taken initiation and having bathed for twelve years he goes above the position of the brave. He practises purifying righteousness and is honoured in heaven." Of the men who read (this) view of Bṛhaspati, four things grow: life, knowledge, glory and power.

Nārada said:

O king, all the sacred rules told by Bṛhaspati to Indra were told by great god (Maheśa) to me, his devotee.

CHAPTER THIRTYTHREE

A Hymn to Śani as a Remover of Trouble

Nārada said:

1. O best god, tell me how the oppression caused by Saturn goes away (i.e. is removed). A living being is freed by that which is heard from your mouth.

Mahādeva said:

2-11. O divine sage, litsen to the account. By that you will be free from bondage. This Saturn is the lord of Planets and the great lord of all. This divinity is well-known. He is a great Planet of the form of death. He is having matted hair; is having hair like diamond pins; he is fearful to the demons. O lord, in this world his account is not well-known. I have especially guarded it and have not told it to anyone. Formerly in Raghu's family there was a very famous king, Daśaratha by name. He was a sovereign emperor and a great hero. Knowing Saturn to be near Kṛttikā the astrologers informed him: Now Saturn will go piercing Rohiṇī (i.e. will pass through Rohiṇī); the piercing of the cart (-like shape of the constellation Rohiṇī) is very fierce and fearful to the gods and demons; for twelve years there will be a very great (i.e. severe) famine. Having heard these words, the king held consultation with his ministers: "What is the fearful (calamity) that has come?" Seeing the world, the citizens and the peasants distressed, people everywhere said: "The end of the world has come. Regions with cities, villages have been frightened all around." The devout king asked brāhmaṇas led by Vasiṣṭha: "O best brāhmaṇas, tell me what measure (should) be (adopted) now?"

Vasiṣṭha said:

12-18. This is the star of Prajāpati. When it is pierced, where (i.e. how) will the subjects remain? This conjunction cannot be averted (even) by Brahmā and Śakra etc.

Thinking in his mind about a rash act, he took up his divine bow along with divine weapons, quickly got into

his chariot and went to the group of stars (i.e. to the sky), numbering a lakh, and remaining over the Sun, and (covering a region) of a yojana and a quarter, and dwelling on the back of Rohiṇī. Formerly king Daśaratha, shining with great jewels and bright with a diadem and a crown looked bright in his golden, divine chariot which was decorated with gems and jewels, to which horses having the colour of swans were yoked, and which had a banner (fluttering) high. At that time he shone in the sky like another sun. Having fully (drawn) his bow up to the ear he fixed a missile that would destroy (everything). Saturn, having seen that destructive missile causing fear to gods and demons, laughed through its fear and said these words:

Saturn said:

19-20. O lord of kings, your valour is great and causes fear to the enemies. O king, gods, demons, human beings, siddhas, vidyādharas, serpents, when looked at by me, are reduced to ash. O lord of kings, I am pleased with your penance and valour. Ask for a boon—whatever you desire in your mind. I shall grant it.

Daśaratha said:

21-24. You should never pierce Rohiṇī and go (i.e. you should never pass through Rohiṇī), as long as the rivers, the oceans, the Moons, the Sun and the earth remain. I have, O Sauri, solicited (what I want). I do not desire any other boon from you.

Granting him an eternal boon, Śani said: "Let it be so". Again being pleased, he said: "O you of a good vow, ask for a boon." With a pleased mind he (the king) then solicited another boon from Saturn. (He said): "O Sun's son, you should never pierce (i.e. pass through) the cart (i.e. Rohiṇī). Never cause a famine (lasting) for twelve years'.

Saturn said:

25-27. There shall never be a famine (lasting) for twelve years. This fame of yours will spread in the three worlds.

The king, having obtained a couple of boons, and thrilling (with joy) kept his bow on the chariot, and with palms of his hands joined he meditated upon goddess Sarasvatī and Vināyaka, the chief of (Śiva's) attendants. (Then) king Daśaratha recited this hymn of praise of Saturn:

Daśaratha said:

28-38. My homage to Kṛṣṇa, Nīla (i.e. the dark one), to Śitikaṇṭhanibha (i.e. one who resembles Śiva), to Kālāgnirūpa (i.e. of the form of the destructive fire), to Kṛtānta (i.e. Death). My obeisance to Nirmāṁsadeha (i.e. having no i.e. very little flesh in his body), to Dīrghaśmasrujāta (i.e. having long moustache and beard), to Viśālanetra (i.e. having big eyes), to you having thin belly and fearful figure. My homage to Puṣkalagātra (i.e. having a large body), to Sthūlaroman (i.e. having thick hair), to Dīrgha (i.e. long), to Śuṣka (i.e. dry); salutation to you having death-like fangs. Salutation to Koṭarākṣa (i.e. having hollow-like senses), Durnirīkṣya (i.e. difficult to be looked at); Salutation to Ghora (i.e. fearful), to Raudra (i.e. fierce), to Bhīṣaṇa (i.e. terrible), to Kapālin (i.e. wearing skulls); homage to Sarvabhakṣa (i.e. one consuming everything), to you, O Valimukha (i.e. to you who have wrinkles on your face); salutation to you, O Sun's son, to you, O Bhāskari (i.e. the Sun's son), to Bhayada (i.e. causing fear); homage to you, O Adhodṛṣṭi (i.e. (looking down), to you, O Saṁvartaka (i.e. fire of destruction), to Mandagati (i.e. moving slowly), salutation to Nistriṁśa (i.e. pitiless), to you whose body is burnt by penance, to you who are always engaged in abstract meditation; constant homage to Kṣudhārta (i.e. oppressed with hunger), to Atṛpta (i.e. not content); salutation to you, the eye of knowledge, to the son of Kaśyapa's son. When you are pleased, you give a kingdom; when you are angry you take it away in a moment.

Thus praised, that very powerful king of Planets, viz. Saturn, the son of the Sun, was thrilled (with joy) and again said these words (to Daśaratha): "O you best king of a good vow, with this hymn of praise of (i.e. recited by) you, I am pleased. Ask for your desired boon. I shall grant it, O descendant of Raghu."

Daśaratha said:

39. O Sauri (i.e. Sun's son), from today you are not to cause any trouble to anyone—gods, demons, men, beasts, birds and serpents.

Śani said:

40-51. Grahas (i.e. Planets) are (so called) since they seize (a being). They are said to cause trouble. I (shall) tell you about something proper which is solicited and cannot be given. A man who will recite once or twice this hymn of praise recited by you, will be free from trouble (just) at the moment. In the fourth existence in the end, I, having gone to death, would give death to gods, demons, human beings, siddhas, vidyādharas and goblins. On the other hand, I shall never trouble him who with faith, becomes pure and calm, worships my iron image with Śamī-leaves, and who would offer as present iron mixed with beans, rice, sesamum-seeds, and would give a black cow, a bull to a brāhmaṇa, and would, especially on my day (i.e. Saturday) worship (me) with this hymn, and would, with the palms of his hands joined, recite the hymn (in my honour) after having worshipped me. I shall always protect him and (keep away) the trouble from a Planet during the Planet's influence, in the sign of Zodiac in which a person is born, in the Planet's aspect or in the middle of it. By doing this only, the world would be free from trouble. Thus, O descendant of Raghu, I have skilfully granted you a boon.

Having obtained three boons, king Daśaratha regarded himself as successful and saluted Śani. Permitted by Śani, he speedily got into his chariot and went to his place. Then the king had obtained bliss. That man who having got up in the morning on a Saturday, would recite this hymn of praise, so also the man who devoutly listens to this hymn of praise when it is being recited, is freed from a sin, and is honoured in heaven.

CHAPTER THIRTYFOUR

The Account of Trispṛśā

Nārada said:

1. O lord, especially narrate to me the vow called Trispṛśā, by hearing which people are free from the bondage of their acts (just) at (that) moment.

Mahādeva said:

2-12a. Listen to the great vow called Trispṛśā of the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa. It puts to an end all streams of sins. It destroys great unhappiness. It gives the desired objects to those who desire them, and gives salvation to those who have no desire. O brāhmaṇa, listen to that vow called Trispṛśā from me who am narrating it. Viṣṇu is directly worshipped in the Kali age by him who, O great sage, always narrates the (account of) Trispṛśā. All the sin would not come to an end by the repetition of the name of a deity accompanied with burnt offerings. (But) there is no doubt that it gets exhausted merely by uttering the name of Trispṛśā. O best brāhmaṇa, if Trispṛśā is not observed, salvation does not take place even by reading sacred texts, Purāṇas and other (works), (performing) sacrifices, (visits to) crores of sacred places, (observing) many multitudes of vows, worshipping deities. This date (*tithi*) sacred to Viṣṇu is noted by the god of gods for (securing) salvation. For brāhmaṇas, especially in the Kali age, the Sāṁkhya is difficult to understand; so also there is lack of control over the senses, and there is no stability of the mind. Trispṛśā gives salvation to those who are attached to sensual objects, who are without meditation and lack retentive memory. The Disc-holder (i.e. Viṣṇu) formerly narrated it to me and Brahmā and to those who had bowed down (to him) in the Milky Ocean. I have granted salvation even to those, except the Sāṅkhyas, who, even though attached to sensual objects observe the Trispṛśā vow. Trispṛśā gives salvation to those who are attached to sensual pleasures.

12b-18. O great sage, it (i.e. the vow of Trispṛśā) has been observed even by many groups of sages. If Trispṛśā takes place in the bright half of Kārtika with the Moon or Mercury, it

destroys crores of sins. The skull of Brahmā fell on the ground just at that moment from the hand of the great lord (i.e. Śiva), possessing (the sin of) murder and observing a fast on that day. The goddess Gaṅgā was freed from the streams of crores of sins in the Kali age, due to the advice of Viṣṇu and fasting on the Trispṛśā day. O great sage, the sin of eight murders that formerly took place in the case of Bahuvīrya, was removed by means of Bhṛgu's advice and fasting on Trispṛśā. O best brāhmaṇa, Śatāyudha had killed a brāhmaṇa in a forest. He was free from (the sin of) murder of the brāhmaṇa due to fasting on Trispṛśā. Due to the advice of Jīva, (the sin due to) the killing of Namuci (committed) by Indra vanished on account of fasting on Trispṛśā, O best among the principal sages.

19-23. O best brāhmaṇa, sins like the murder of a brāhmaṇa etc. perish by means of fasting on Trispṛśā. Then what can be said about other sins? O best brāhmaṇa, if (the vow of) Trispṛśā is not observed, then salvation is not possible at Gayā, at Kāśī, at Gomatī or near Kṛṣṇa. Eternal salvation takes place by dying at Prayāga or at Gomatī or near Kṛṣṇa, (so also) merely by bathing at Gomatī. By fasting on Trispṛśā salvation takes place even at home in the case of him who indulges in (objects of) senses and is full of sensual pleasures. Even for one who has turned away from sensual objects salvation is difficult according to the Sāṁkhya(-path). Therefore, O best brāhmaṇa, observe the Trispṛśā which gives salvation.

Nārada said:

24. O best god, what kind of vow is the great vow called Trispṛśā, which gives salvation to brāhmaṇas, and which you told me about now.

Mahādeva said:

25. O brāhmaṇa, formerly Viṣṇu told Jāhnavī (i.e. Gaṅgā) about (the vow of) Trispṛśā through compassion (for her) on the bank of Prācī Sarasvatī.

Jāhnavī said:

26-27. O Viṣṇu, in this Kali age many (people) possessing the streams of crores of sins like those of the murder of a

brāhmaṇa, bathe in my water. Due to the blemishes of hundreds of sins of them, my body is made turbid. O god having Garuḍa as your banner, how will that sin of me go away?

Prācī Mādhava said:

28-35. I shall undoubtedly tell you. O daughter, do not weep. My place is the Śyāma Vaṭa; and Prācī Devī, daughter of Brahmā, flows in front of me. Looking at the chief goddess, every day bathe there. By that you will be purified. There is no doubt that I stay along with hundreds of holy places and gods there where there is Prācī, Brahmā's daughter. My place is pure and dear (to me). It destroys (the sin of) crores of murders. Since you are dearer to me than my (own) life, I, being pleased, have given it to you. O Jāhnavī, by my order thousands of crores of holy places always remain in the water of Prācī Sarasvatī. O daughter, Brahmā's daughter Prācī removes all sins on bathing once (only) in front of me (in her water). (She removes) sins due to the murder of a brāhmaṇa, drinking liquor, killing a cow or a śūdra woman, snatching the wealth of a brāhmaṇa, not honouring one's mother and father, using a vehicle, deceiving one's preceptor, or eating what is prohibited. O best river, bathe (there). You will be free from sins.

Jāhnavī said:

36. O lord of gods, I cannot come every day. O Viṣṇu, tell me now how (my) sins will perish.

Prācī Mādhava said:

37-40. O Jāhnavī, since you have risen from my feet, I shall tell you something else if you are unable to come (here) every day. You should observe (the vow of) the auspicious Trispṛśā, which is superior to (a bath in) Sarasvatī, which is superior to hundreds of crores of sacred places, which is superior to crores of sacrifices, which is superior to vows and gifts, which is superior to muttering (of hymns) and sacrifices, and which gives the four goals, which is superior to (the practices laid down in) the Sāṁkhya-Yoga (path). When it comes (i.e. falls) in a month, during either the bright or the dark half, it should be observed, O best river. When it is observed, one is free from a sin.

Jāhnavī said:

41-42. O god Viṣṇu, tell me how that Trispṛśā, about whose greatness of this kind you told me now, is. O lord, tell me if the day on which the three dates, viz. tenth, eleventh and twelfth combine would be the Trispṛśā day, or if it is different.

Kṛṣṇa said:

43-54. O goddess, that Trispṛśā which you mentioned is demonish. With care it is to be avoided as the husband who is without any livelihood (i.e. a job). It is said to be of the demons and destroys life and vigour. With care it should be avoided like a woman in her menses. My day especially in conjunction with the tenth day should be avoided like her who, having abandoned her own caste, has gone to lower castes. As ignorant people are polluted due to the contact with a woman in her menses, similarly my day in conjunction with the tenth is censurable for men. Trispṛśā, if properly fasted on, destroys (the sin) of a hundred murders. That day on which the three days viz. the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth fall, should be known as Trispṛśā and not one in conjunction with the tenth. A man, having gone through an expiation after having committed a fault, would be free. O divine river, I do not forgive the fault due to being pierced by the tenth. He who has observed the Ekādaśī-vow (on the day) mixed with the tenth has taken the *halāhala* poison or has taken poison. Thinking like this, he should not observe (a fast on) my day in conjunction with the tenth. The religious merit or the progeny of him (who does so) perishes. He would cause (the members of) his family to drop from heaven and takes (them) to (hells) like Raurava. Having purified one's body, one should observe (the vow on) my day. The day when there is increase (in its duration) should be avoided except piercing of (i.e. being mixed with another day) and combined with Śravaṇa etc. The merit of those who fast on the Ekādaśī day perishes. This is especially so in the case of the increase in its duration and when a doubt has arisen. Dvādaśī (-fast) should be observed. It is dear to him.

Jāhnavī said:

55. O lord of the world, according to your words (i.e. as you have told me) I shall observe (the vow of) Trispṛśā. By your behest I shall be free from all sins.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

56-57. Go (back) to your own place. You should never entertain fear. O goddess, O best river, sin shall never come to you. Those who, after having worshipped Mādhava, pay homage to the lord of the world, go to (i.e. obtain) the highest position.

Jāhnavī said:

58. O Brahman, tell me the manner (in which the vow is to be observed). I (shall) do it with everything (I have). I shall propitiate the lord of gods, Dāmodara, Anāmaya.

Prācī Mādhava said:

59-65a. O goddess, listen. I shall tell you the manner of (i.e. in which) Trispṛśā (should be observed), even by hearing which a man is freed from sins, O best river. According to the capacity of one's wealth, a golden image of me (weighing) a pala, half of it, or half of the latter, should be fashioned. A pot of copper should be made and should be filled with sesamum-seeds. A white pitcher containing water and with five gems, should be wrapped with garlands of flowers, and made fragrant with the incense of agaru. Then after having bathed (the image of) Viṣṇu and having smeared (it with sandal) one should put (it in the vessel). Then with a pair of garments (the image) should be seated and the worship should be done with hymns and by reciting (passages from) the Purāṇas, so also with white, seasonal flowers and tender Tulasī-leaves. One should offer an umbrella along with sandals to Viṣṇu, so also pleasing articles of food and very many fruits. One should offer a new, strong sacred thread along with an upper garment.

65b-77. One should also cause to be given a beautiful, long and strong bamboo-staff. Having duly and devoutly worshipped the feet (of the image saying) 'to Dāmodara', its knees (saying) 'to Mādhava', its private part (saying) 'to Kāmaprada', its waist

(saying) 'to Vāmanamūrti', its navel (saying) 'to Padmanābha', its belly (saying) 'to Viśvayoni', its heart (saying) 'to Jñānagamya', its throat (saying) 'to Vaikuṇṭhagāmin', its arms (saying) 'to Sahasrabāhu', its eyes (saying) 'to Yogarūpin', one should make a respectful offering. (Taking) a white coconut placed on a conch and wrapped with threads in both his hands, (he should say), "O Janārdana, if, by just being remembered you remove sins and bad dreams and evil omens seen by the mind, then, O god, protect me from the fear of hell due to fear and calamity, so also of this and the next world; accept (this) respectful offering. Salutation to you. O Dāmodara, always look favourably at me." One should then offer incense, lamp and wave a light and should revolve a lotus over the head of Viṣṇu. Having performed this rite, one should then worship his own preceptor. One should give (the preceptor) gold, garments, and a dress with a turban, so also shoes, an umbrella, a ring and a water-pot, so also a meal, a tāmbūla, seven (kinds of) corn, and a gift. Having properly worshipped the preceptor, the lord of gods, one should keep awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, with dance and music, according to the sacred precepts. At the close of the night one having duly made a respectful offering to the deity, and having performed the rites like bathing, one should eat along with brāhmaṇas.

Śiva said:

78-87. O brāhmaṇa, having heard this account of Trispṛśā which is wonderful and thrilling, one gets the religious merit due to bath in the Gaṅgā. By fasting on Trispṛśā one gets the fruit of thousands of Aśvamedha sacrifices and hundreds of Vājapeya sacrifices. Along with all the sides like that of one's father, that of one's mother, and that of one's own one is freed, and one is honoured in the world of Viṣṇu. By fasting on Trispṛśā one gets the same religious merit as is obtained by (visiting) crores of holy places and crores of sacred places. O best brāhmaṇa, all those—brāhmaṇas, evil-minded kṣatriyas, vaiśyas or those born as śūdras, so also persons of other castes—come to (i.e. obtain) salvation after having left the earth. This is the king-hymn among the hymns as would be (the hymn of) twelve letters. Of vows (it is the chief) for him who has observed it. It was first observed by Brahmā, then was observed by royal sages. Then,

O child, what can be said about others? Trispṛśā gives salvation. O brāhmaṇa, listen to the fruit of him (i.e. which he gets) who devoutly observes this Trispṛśā vow. He who observes the Trispṛśā (vow) gets that fruit which is obtained by bathing in Gaṅgā at Vārāṇasī for thousands of the periods of Manu. A man who observes the vow of Trispṛśā obtains that fruit obtained by means of bathing in Prācī and Yamunā for crores of years.

88-95. A man who observes the Trispṛśā vow gets that fruit which is obtained by (bathing during) crores of solar eclipses at Kurukṣetra, or by (giving) hundreds of bhāras of gold. By means of just one fast thousands of crores of sins and hundreds of (sins due to) murders are quickly reduced to ash. That vow of Trispṛśā gives salvation to those who have not got it. Hundreds of (persons committing) great sins desire salvation, O brāhmaṇic sage. Kṛṣṇa himself told (this vow) in front of (i.e. to) Pārāśarya. He who, even though bound by streams of sins, shows this Vaiṣṇava (Purāṇa) after writing it to a brāhmaṇa, obtains salvation. (This vow) is secured, O wise one, by means of religious merit (collected during) hundreds of ages of Manu. Trispṛśā is difficult to be secured by men. It is not easily had in the world. The fruit of the existence of those mean men, so also their life, who, having had (i.e. having known the day of) Trispṛśā, do not observe it, is fruitless. Those who have, after having (come to know the day of) Trispṛśā, observed it (even) once have overcome (being reduced to) the state of a goblin without Śrāddha or without sons.

CHAPTER THIRTYFIVE

The Vow of Unmīlanī

Mahādeva said:

1-9. Hereafter I shall narrate to you the excellent (vow of) the Unmīlanī (Ekādaśī), having just heard about which a man is free from the bondage of the worldly existence. A sinner is

free from his sins and is honoured in heaven. His deities and manes would obtain a good position. A student gets knowledge and would have all his desires (fulfilled) by means of the vow of that (Ekādaśī). There is no doubt about that. He is honoured in heaven. There only he secures his position, and is honoured in the world of Śiva (also). Therefore, O king, do honour the devotees of Viṣṇu. O king, those who always serve the devotees of Viṣṇu (obtain good position). Do not punish them. O king, a king takes food after they have taken it. They alone have worshipped Viṣṇu who have devoutly honoured (Viṣṇu's devotees). O king, having daily held the Śālagrāma stone on the head, every day very devoutly wear it round your neck. O king, devoutly partake of the remnant of the incense of (i.e. offered to) Viṣṇu. O king, you always inform the devotees on waving the light before the idol. Having devoutly turned water from the conch round the head of (the idol of) Viṣṇu, you bear it on your head and the remaining you give to Viṣṇu's devotees.

10-17a. O brāhmaṇa, having every day offered eatables with all ingredients (to Viṣṇu) you eat them. Food offered to Viṣṇu is eaten along with (i.e. in the company of) Viṣṇu's devotees. Every day devoutly praise him with (the hymn containing) his thousand names. Offer a light and respectful offering and sing and dance. O best king, worship him deserving worship with śyāmā shoots. O child, it is very difficult (to get an opportunity) to worship (the deity) with śyāmā shoots. The religious merit due to the worship performed with dūrvā sprouts is equal to (the one obtained by) the gift of the earth. Therefore, in this world, on this earth, there is nothing like dūrvā. He who desires absorption into Viṣṇu should worship (Viṣṇu) with dūrvā. You may not worship (him) especially with barley (grains) or sacred rice grains, O best king. Dvādaśī-vow which is observed in every fortnight destroys great sins, O great king. It always gives salvation, happiness and also (long) life.

17b-25a. This vow (in honour) of Viṣṇu is said to give salvation to Viṣṇu's devotees. It gives happiness to the householders and salvation to the ascetics. It cures all diseases etc., it is pure and it purifies the body. O king, do not observe it merely by words. Observe the tenth without penetration by another day and by keeping awake. Worship Viṣṇu every day with heaps of Tulasī-

leaves, O best king. The gopīcandana leaf (i.e. a mark) put on the head purifies all the people, O best king. Therefore, put it made from gopīcandana (on your head). All those who have applied the mark—the killer of a brāhmaṇa, he who has stolen gold, a drunkard, he who has approached one (i.e. a woman) who should not be approached, and he who has told lies—obtain salvation. Put around your neck a garland—pre-eminent, disjoined and even—garland made of Dhātrī-fruits and of Tulaśī-leaves. You worship it daily with the Śālagrāma stone having come up in Dvārakā. It gives the fruit of enjoyment and salvation.

25b-28. You read before Viṣṇu the Purāṇa called Padma, so also the account of Prahrāda, king of demons. O King, noting carefully the sacred texts, you keep away those men who observe the day (in honour) of Viṣṇu along with the proximate day. The king in that country in which the day (in honour) of Viṣṇu is observed along with its proximate day is smeared with sin and becomes a resident of hell. Abandoning the proximate (day) of four kinds and having observed a fast on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, a man, after having emancipated a crore (members of) his family, is honoured in Viṣṇu's heaven.

Gautama said:

29-32a. O king, listen to the great vow called Vaiṣṇava, hearing which all sinners obtain salvation just at that moment. I have not told anyone (else) the religious merit due to Dvādaśī. O great king, you are a devotee of Viṣṇu and a follower of Viṣṇu among men. (Therefore) listen to that very secret vow (in honour) of Viṣṇu. Formerly, due to my devotion Viṣṇu who was very much pleased, told me about (the vow called) Unmīlanī.

32b-38. O king, I shall tell you (about) it. That day on which the Ekādaśī lasts for the day and night and for a ghaṭikā on the next day, should be known as Unmīlanī, and it is especially dear to Viṣṇu. All the holy places and sacred places that are there in the three worlds can be compared only with a croreth part of the merit of Unmīlanī, so also sacrifices and austerities. There was nothing and will be nothing like Unmīlanī. (Even) Prayāga, Kurukṣetra, Puṣkara, the mountains Himālaya, Meru, Gandhamādana, Nīla, Niṣadha, Vindhya, (the forest) Naimiṣa, (the rivers) Godāvarī, Kāverī, Candrabhāgā, Vedikā, Tāpī,

Payoṣṇī, Kṣiprā, Candanā, Carmaṇvatī, Sarayū, Candrabhāgā, Gaṇḍikā, Gomatī, Vipāśā, and the great river called Śoṇa, are not like Unmīlanī.

39-50. O King, what is the use of saying (these things) again and again? There is nothing superior to Unmīlanī, and none greater than Viṣṇu. The heaps of the groups of sins of those who have, on obtaining the Unmīlanī (day), worshipped Viṣṇu, fall at that moment only. O king, Viṣṇu should be carefully worshipped with the name of that month in which Unmīlanī day would fall. A silver (image of) Viṣṇu, giving it the name of the month, and of a universal form, should be fashioned according to one's capacity and with faith and devotion. A pitcher should be made (ready) containing pure water, and five jewels, and sandal, flowers and sacred grains, and adorned with a chaplet and a garland. A vessel should be made (ready) containing water and filled with wheat, with many gems and adored with many kinds of sandal, with the fragrance of jasmine flowers and adored with jasmine flowers. It should be carefully filled with rice called śveta. O royal sage, he should give (to a brāhmaṇa) a pair of garments, a sacred thread with an upper garment, a pair of shoes, and an umbrella (to be held) over his head. (So also he should give) food, a water-pot, seven kinds of corn along with sesamum-seeds, (also) silver, cotton, sweetened milk, and the image of Viṣṇu. Or a cow along with her calf and ornaments, and having golden horns, silver hoops and red back should be given. Or he should give the representation of a cow having bell metal udders and a jewelled tail, to his preceptor. He should devoutly give a furnished bed to a good (brāhmaṇa). He should offer incense, lamp, articles of food, fruits, leaves to the deity.

51-56a. The great devotees should worship Viṣṇu with Tulaśī-leaves and seasonal flowers, and with the hymn. (He should touch his) feet, with (i.e. uttering) the name of the month. (He should touch his) knees (saying 'My homage) to him of the form of Viṣṇu'. (He should touch his) private parts (saying 'My homage) to Guhyapati (i.e. the lord of secrets)'. (He should touch his) waist (saying 'My homage) to Pītavāsas' (i.e. to him who has put on a yellow garment)'. (He should touch his) navel (saying 'My homage) to Brahmamūrtibhṛt (i.e. one who holds Brahmā's form)'. (He should touch his) belly (saying 'My

homage) to Viśvayoni (i.e. the source of all)'. (He should touch his) heart (saying 'My homage) to Jñānagamya (i.e. to him who is reached through knowledge)'. (He should touch his) throat (saying 'My homage) to Vaikuṇṭhamūrti (i.e. to him of the form of Vaikuṇṭha)'. (He should touch his) forehead (saying 'My homage) to Ūrdhvaga (i.e. to him who goes up)'. (He should touch his arm (saying 'My homage) to Dakṣāntakārin (i.e. to him who destroyed Dakṣa)'. (He should touch his) head (saying, 'My homage) to Sureśa (i.e. the lord of gods)'. He should touch his) entire body (saying 'My homage) to Sarvamūrti (i.e. to the universal form)'. With (i.e. uttering) his name he should devoutly worship all (Viṣṇu's) weapons. With coconuts etc. he should offer an oblation. He should make a respectful offering after putting water over the conch, after wrapping it with a thread, and with sandal, flowers and sacred grains.

56b-62a. (He should say): 'O Devadeva (i.e. god of gods), O Mahādeva (i.e. great god), O Śrī Keśava, Janārdana, Subrahmaṇya, my salutation to you who increase the heap of religious merit. Emancipate me from the ocean of the mundane existenee full of grief, infatuation and great sin. I have not done any good deed even during hundreds of crores of existences. Yet, O great master, emancipate me from the ocean of the worldly existence. O lord of gods, by means of this vow emancipate my ancestors who have gone to evil stocks, who have been overpowered by sinful death, or those who will be or who were born from the world of the goblins. I am tired. The devotion of me who am dependent on you is faithful. I have devoutly made a respectful offering (to you). O Gadādhara, (please) accept it'. Having made a respectful offering with incense, lamp etc. due to Viṣṇu, he should please Viṣṇu with hymns of praise, by waving light in front (of his image), songs and dances.

62b-68. He should please his teacher with (gifts of) garments, (other) gifts, gifts of cows and meals. He should do (these) in such a way as the preceptor would be pleased; since the Creator has created the preceptor for emancipating the people, he should carefully honour the preceptor. He who always destroys what is harmful and shows what is beneficial and he who knows all righteous acts and worldly prosperity should be known to be the preceptor. Without practising guile about wealth he should

present it to the preceptor. O king, it becomes complete on its being presented to the preceptor. O best king, having done the daily duty he should take food in the company of brāhmaṇas. He should pass the day in (telling or listening to) stories (about Viṣṇu). He who observes the Unmīlanī-vow in this manner, lives near Viṣṇu for thousands of crores of kalpas.

CHAPTER THIRTYSIX

The Vow of Pakṣavardhinī

Nārada said:

1. O Mahādeva, of what type is (the vow) called Pakṣavardhinī, having observed which a being is free from a great sin?

Śrī Mahādeva said:

2. That would be Pakṣavardhinī, equal to myriads of horse-sacrifices, when either the new-moon day or the full-moon day is complete (i.e. lasts for the entire day and night) with sixty ghaṭikās and prolongs on the day of pratipad (i.e. the first day of a fortnight).

Nārada said :

3. O Mahādeva, now I am asking about the manner of the worship, having done which a man would obtain great fruit.

Mahādeva said:

4-12. O son of a brāhmaṇa, I shall now tell the manner of the worship. There is no doubt that a man gets the fruit when Viṣṇu is worshipped and adored, since by the performance of worship Viṣṇu is pleased. He should put a pitcher, which has no scratch, which is full of water, which is smeared with sandal, which contains five gems, which is wrapped with garlands of flowers. On the pitcher he should place a vessel containing wheat. (The image of) the deity should be made of gold and

should be named after the month. He should nicely bathe (the image of) the god of gods, Jagannātha, the lord of the world, with pañcāmṛta according to the (proper) rite. It should be besmeared with saffron, agaru and sandal. He should offer a pair of garments along with an umbrella and sandals. He should worship the (image of the) lord of deities kept in the vessel on the pitcher. (Touching) the feet (he should say, 'My homage) to Padmanābha'. (Touching) the knees (he should say, 'My homage) to Viśvamūrti'. (Touching) the thighs (he should say, 'My homage) to Jñānagamya (i.e. one who is reached through knowledge). (Touching) the waist (he should say, 'My homage) to Jñānaprada (i.e. one who gives knowledge). (Touching) the belly (he should say, 'My homage) to Viśvanātha'. (Touching) the heart (he should say, 'My homage) to Śrīdhara. (Touching) the throat (he should say, 'My homage) to Kaustubhakaṇṭha'. (Touching) the arms (he should say, 'My homage) to Kṣatrāntakārin (i.e. one who destroyed the kṣatriyas)'. (Touching) the forehead (he should say, 'My homage) to Vyomamūrdhan (i.e. one who has his head in the sky)'. (Touching) the head (he should say, 'My homage) to Sarvarūpin (i.e. of a universal form)'. He should also utter his name (and worship) Lakṣmī full of all limbs and of a divine form.

13-19. The wise one should thus duly worship and then should offer materials of worship along with a white coconut to the Disc-holder, the god of gods. The vow becomes complete by means of this offering. (He should pray to the deity as:) 'O lord of the world, lift me who am drowned in the ocean of the worldly existence. You are the lord of all the worlds. You are actually the lord of the world. Accept the respectful offering offered by me. Salutation to you, O Padmanābha'. Offerings of pleasant food, especially those having (all) the six flavours should be very devoutly offered to Viṣṇu. He should devoutly offer the nāga-leaf along with camphor to the god. He should fill the lamp with ghee or with sesamum-oil. Doing (these) properly he should (duly) worship the preceptor. He should cause to be offered (i.e. should offer him) garments, a turban and a dress. He should cause to be given (i.e. should give) the preceptor a present according to his capacity. Having given (him) food and tāmbūla

he should cause to be given (i.e. should give) him a respectful offering.

20-32. The Dvādaśi (called) Pakṣavardhinī should be observed by the poor while keeping in view the estimate of their wealth and according to their capacity. It should be carefully and properly observed. Then he should keep awake by singing, dancing, the recitation of a Purāṇa and laughter and mirth. They praise and command the keeping awake (in honour) of the Disc-holder (i.e. Viṣṇu). For ten existences an every day festival would take place in their houses. Therefore, a man should observe this most virtuous Pakṣavardhinī. Having done (i.e. had) all religious merit, he undoubtedly obtains (its) fruits. Those wise men who have listened to the greatness of Pakṣavardhinī, have done meritorious deeds till the final destruction of the world. A man obtains that religious merit which he (would) obtain by practising the Pañcāgnisādhana or by visiting sacred places, by keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu. The Pakṣavardhinī is virtuous, pure, and destroys sins. When a fast is observed on the day (of Pakṣavardhinī) it destroys (the sin due to) crores of brāhmaṇa-murders. It was, O sage, formerly observed by Vasiṣṭha, so also by Bhāradvāja; this one, dear to Viṣṇu, was observed by Dhruva and Ambarīṣa. It is virtuous like Kāśī. It is like Dvārakā. When a devotee fasts on this day, it gives him his desired object. It is blessed, most blessed. It destroys (the sin of) a myriad of murders. It should be especially observed by those who are devoted to knowledge. O god, lord of all should be served by all who are intent upon (observing) the vow. As the moon waxes, especially in the bright half, the Pakṣavardhinī waxes for the devotee (of Viṣṇu). As darkness goes away at sunrise, the sin of a man on observing (the vow of) Pakṣavardhinī perishes.

CHAPTER THIRTYSEVEN

Keeping Awake on Ekādaśī and Dvādaśī

Mahādeva said:

1. O Nārada, listen to the importance of keeping awake, having listened to which (even) a great sinner undoubtedly obtains salvation.

Nārada said:

2-6. Viṣṇu, the lord of all, is always a purifier. O Śiva, I have heard from your mouth the importance of a fast (in honour) of him. Still I desire to hear about the importance of keeping awake. Of what kind is the importance of keeping awake? Of what kind is the nocturnal devotion? O lord of the universe, O master, tell (me) about the worship (offered) during the various watches. You are always adored in the worlds. You are god Janārdana (i.e. Viṣṇu). You are the god, the lord of the universe, since you are devoted to Viṣṇu. You, the lord of Umā, are the greatest among all devotees. In this world you are known by means of your devotion. Therefore, O lord of the universe, tell (me) in which manner people will be emancipated, so also (tell me about) the importance of keeping awake.

Mahādeva said:

7-18. On the Ekādaśi day a man, after having devoutly worshipped Viṣṇu at night, should keep awake along with Viṣṇu's devotees in front of (the image of) Viṣṇu. The man who always sings, plays upon musical instruments, dances, listens to the Purāṇas, offers incense, waves lights (before the image), offers eatables, flowers, sandal and unguents, fruits, respectful offering, presents with devotion, and controls his senses, and O best brāhmaṇa, speaks truthful and proper words followed by action, and who always keeps awake gladly, is free from all sins and becomes dear to Viṣṇu. When keeping awake at night has become (necessary), those devotees of Viṣṇu who sleep, have lost (the fruit of) the fast and (that of) the vow called Viṣṇu(vrata). Those men, O wise one, who keep awake on the (night of the Viṣṇu-vrata) called Viṣṇu-jāgara through devotion for Viṣṇu and do

not at all sleep, and repeat mentally (i.e. to themselves) Viṣṇu's name, should be known to be most blessed. Especially on this night (the repetition of Viṣṇu's name gives the fruit of) the gift of a cow every moment; (the fruit) is fourfold (if the name is repeated) for a ghaṭikā; it is crorefold (if the name is repeated) for a watch (i.e. three hours); it is countless (if the name is repeated) for four watches. By keeping awake (just) for a twinkling of the eye (i.e. a moment), and that too especially in front of Viṣṇu, the fruit (obtained) is crorefold; it is countless. The fruit of (i.e. obtained by) the best man who dances in front of Viṣṇu, is never lost from his birth to his death. He should, with his mind free from dejection, wave lights before Viṣṇu, with wonder, energy, without sinful talk etc., accompanied by going round (the deity keeping it to his right) and preceded by a salutation.

19-27a. That man, who devoutly keeps awake on Ekādaśī, which is twentysixfold fruitful, is not reborn on the earth. He who thus without egotism born of wealth devoutly keeps awake on Viṣṇu's day, is merged into the supreme soul. That wealthy man who through egotism born of wealth keeps awake, (is) a rogue and a wicked man (and) has indeed lost his soul. He, when the (occasion for) keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu has come, ridicules it, is born as an insect in feces (and remains as such) for sixty thousand years. That brāhmaṇa knowing the Vedas who, especially through dancing, indulges in ridicule is called a cāṇḍāla. He who for a moment or half a moment(?) keeps awake, obtains the best position (as far as) righteousness, material welfare and sensual pleasures (are concerned). He who is always devoted to the Vedic and scriptural injunctions and who every day performs sacrifices, goes down (to hell if) he ridicules when keeping awake at night has come (to be practised). He who worshipping me, is given to ridiculing Viṣṇu goes to hell with twentyone (members of) his family. Viṣṇu is Śiva and Śiva is Viṣṇu. They have the same form, (but) remain (separately) in two forms.

27b-30. Therefore, a man should not in any way ridicule (the vow). Bitten by the serpent of Kali the destroyers of honey sleep by day(?); deluded by illusion they do not at all keep awake. Those to whom Ekādaśī has come (and is passed by them) without keeping themselves awake in the Kali age have perished,

since life is uncertain. There is no doubt about this. He raised the couple of eyes after having given the position of Viṣṇu (*obscure*!). Sinners do not see the awakening done (in honour) of Viṣṇu. In the absence of a public reader of a Purāṇa, he should get done singing and dancing. If there is a public reader, (then) O divine sage, he should first read the Purāṇa.

31-37a. O child, on doing the awakening (in honour) of Viṣṇu, the religious merit (that is obtained) is a crorefold more than that of a horse-sacrifice or a Vājapeya sacrifice. A man having kept awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, emancipates the families on the side of father, on the side of mother and on the wife's side. O brāhmaṇa, on keeping awake in honour of Viṣṇu he emancipates (the members of) his family. On a day of fast that is 'pierced' (i.e. that is mixed with another day) the keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, worshipping him, giving gifts—all this is useless as (a good) turn done to the ungrateful. When keeping awake is begun on such a 'pierced' day—the day of the fast—Viṣṇu leaves that place and goes after giving a curse. Among those who keep awake on a day that is not 'pierced' (i.e. not mixed with another day), Viṣṇu being pleased remains in their midst and dances. For as many days as he keeps awake in front of Viṣṇu for so many yugas he is honoured in Viṣṇu's world.

37b-41. For as many days as he remains without keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, for those many thousands of years he does not return from (i.e. lives in) Raurava hell. He who on the Ekādaśī day sleeps without keeping awake or who remains like a dumb man and does not practise singing or does not read (the Purāṇa text), has dumbness for seven existences for want of keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu. O brāhmaṇa, one should know that he who, the foolish one, does not dance in front of Viṣṇu by keeping awake, has lameness for seven existences. But he who sings, dances and keeps awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, gets Brahmā's position, my position and truly that of Viṣṇu (also).

42-50. That devotee of Viṣṇu who (himself) being engaged in keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, enlightens people, would live along with his manes and for a long time in Vaikuṇṭha. The man who gives (others) the idea about keeping awake(in honour) of Viṣṇu, would live for sixty thousand years in Śveta Dvīpa. O

brāhmaṇa, all that sin which men commit during crores of existences, perishes during the night on keeping awake (in honour) of Śrīkṛṣṇa. For those who keep awake in front of a Śālagrāma stone the fruit for every watch is said to be that which is had (by keeping awake on) a crore of lunar months. Those who do not keep awake when the day (of the vow) of Viṣṇu has come, their observance of the vow is in vain due to the censure of the devotees. Even by (the performance of) myriads of sacrifices pleasures of senses, wealth, sons, fame, eternal worlds are not obtained without keeping awake on the Dvādaśī (day). He who does not have a mind to keep awake on the Dvādaśī day, has no right to worship Viṣṇu. The number of footsteps of him who goes to Viṣṇu's temple for keeping awake has the merit of an equal number of horse-sacrifices. For as many years a man keeping awake lives in heaven as the number of dust (particles) fallen there on the road from the feet (of those who) walk (along it).

51-58. Therefore, from one's house one should go to Viṣṇu's temple for keeping awake. In the Kali (age) to destroy sins this Dvādaśī is (the best) among Dvādaśīs. Keeping awake is said to be of nine types: Full of censure of others, with the mind void of tranquillity, bereft of sacred precepts, without music, so also without light (to be waved before the image of the deity), without the necessary articles (obtainable) according to one's capacity, indifferent, full of censure, and especially full of quarrels. That keeping awake which is according to the scriptural injunctions, is full of dance and music with musical instruments, with the beating of time in music, with light and honey, is accompanied by proper utterances produced with devotion, is pleasing and causing delight, and amuses the enchanted people—(such) keeping awake having these twelve merits and dear to Viṣṇu should be done with efforts in the bright and the dark halves (of the month). What is the use of observing many vows and living at a sacred place to him who does not keep awake when the twelfth day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu has come? He who even while travelling and though full of perspiration, does not give up keeping awake on the twelfth day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, is dear to me, O brāhmaṇa.

59-62a. That devotee of me who deluded by sin does not keep awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, has his worship in vain, (as) he would not (i.e. does not) worship him who is venerable to me. He who eats on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, is not a devotee of Śiva, is not a worshipper of the Sun, is not a devotee of Śakti, nor the votary of (Śiva's) attendant. He should be known to be inferior to a beast. He, a wicked and sinful person, who eats on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, has, after having resorted to the strength of my devotion, acted disagreeably.

62b-64. His body is wrapped inside and outside with crores of sins. Those who keep awake on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, are freed. He who having kept awake, has observed the vow of Dvādaśī that is not mixed (with another day), has given an elbow to (i.e. has avoided) the messengers of Yama. O best sage, they, expecting (to go to) heaven are undoubtedly freed. (On the contrary) those who observe the vow of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu on a day mixed (with another day) have longed for happiness in hell.

65-69. He (i.e. such a man) has killed his manes, and has murdered gods; has given (his kingdom to demons by observing the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu which is mixed (with another day). For a man who keeps awake with such dispositions on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, who clapping his hands and with a delighted mind dances, who sings songs with his mouth, manifests (many kinds of) joy, who remaining awake on the night stands before Viṣṇu, reads Kṛṣṇa's accounts, amuses the groups of Viṣṇu's devotees, who with his hair standing on end produces musical sounds from his mouth, presents many kinds of food, and causes (others) to talk freely, the fruit at every moment is said to be the same as got by visiting crores of holy places.

70-74. He who without a dejected mind presents incense and waves lights in front (of the image) of Viṣṇu on the night of keeping awake (i.e. on which he keeps awake) would be the lord of the seven islands (i.e. of the earth). Due to keeping awake on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, all those sins like (the ones due to) the murder of a brāhmaṇa, perish piece by piece. On one hand are all the sacrifices concluded with (the offering of) excellent presents, and on the other there is keeping awake (in honour) of the god of gods. Which is dear to Viṣṇu? Kāśī,

Puṣkara, Prayāga, Naimiṣa, Gayā, the great holy place of Śāla-grāma, the Arbuda forest, Pauṣkara (i.e. the holy Puṣkara), Mathurā, and all (other) sacred places, so also sacrifices and all the four Vedas go to (i.e. attend) the keeping awake (in honour of) Viṣṇu.

75-78. O best brāhmaṇa, all rivers (like) Gaṅgā, Sarasvatī, Tāpī, Yamunā, Śatadrukā, Candrabhāgā, Vitastā, so also ponds, deep lakes, all seas go there on the Ekādaśī (day for) keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu. These men desirable to gods, being delighted by the musical instrument like the lute, dance and sing (at the time of) keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu. In this way having kept awake, having worshipped great Viṣṇu, he should, along with Viṣṇu's devotees, break his fast on the Dvādaśī (day).

Mahādeva said:

79-84. O brāhmaṇa, listen. I shall explain (to you) the excellent importance of Dvādaśī. Dvādaśī should always be known to give sons and to give salvation. Having bathed in the morning, having worshipped Viṣṇu, one should observe a fast. 'O Viṣṇu, by means of this vow of me who am blind due to the darkness of ignorance, be pleased, favour me and give me the sight of knowledge'. Then, after this, he should break fast as is possible for him. After this he should duly get done (proper rites) as desired. O brāhmaṇa, when the Dvādaśī (lasts) shorter for breaking the fast, then he who desires salvation, should break the fast at night. Then there would be no blemish due to (breaking the fast at) night and there would be nothing that is prohibited. He should get the duty done (i.e. should do it) as by day in the first and the next watches of the night, since it is said that a man should not bathe at night and should not eat at midnight.

85-92. When on the day of breaking the fast Dvādaśī lasts for a short time, then he should do both the morning and the mid-day rites in the morning. I am not able to describe the religious merit especially of that man who has always observed Dvādaśī on the earth. Great men having accomplised all desired objects, would obtain (salvation). Those devotees like Ambarīṣa and others who are well-known in the world, have gone to Viṣṇu's abode after having observed (the vow of) Dvādaśī.

What I told is the truth, the truth again, viz. that there is no god like Viṣṇu, and no day like Dvādaśī. Whatever is given on this day, whatever is eaten, and the worship etc. (offered on this day) —all that is complete when Viṣṇu is worshipped. What is the use of talking much? Viṣṇu dear to his devotees, gives them all their desired objects till the final destruction of the world. All that is given on the Dvādaśī would become fruitful. Whatever is given on the Kurukṣetra is never fruitless. In the same way, O best sage, whatever is given on Dvādaśī would become like that.

CHAPTER THIRTYEIGHT

The Origin of Ekādaśī and the Killing of Demon Mura

Mahādeva said:

1. O son, on one occasion I had gone into the proximity of (i.e. to) Viṣṇu. There I first asked (him) about the importance of Dvādaśī, having heard which all sages having enjoyed pleasures went to heaven.

Nārada said:

2. O Mahādeva, of what kind would be the great (vow of the) Mahādvādaśī? O lord, O ruler of all, what kind of fruit (would one get) by observing it.

Śiva said:

3-17a. O brāhmaṇa, this Ekādaśī gives the fruit (in the form) of great religious merit. It should be observed by the best sages when it is in conjunction with (certain) constellations. Jayā, Vijayā, Jayantī and Pāpanāśinī—all these destroy sins. They should be observed by those who desire (certain) fruits. When, in the bright half (of the month), the star Punarvasu (i.e. the seventh lunar mansion) appears on the Ekādaśī day, that is called Jayā, and it is the best of days. Having observed a fast on that day a man is freed from a sin. There is no doubt about this. When, in the bright half (of the month), the star Śravaṇa

(i.e. the twentysecond lunar mansion) appears on the Dvādaśī day, that is called Vijayā and it is the best of days. Gift given on that day becomes thousandfold (in religious merit); so also food given to brāhmaṇas (becomes like that). In the same way a sacrifice (performed) or a fast (observed on that day) gives more than a thousandfold fruit. When on the Dvādaśī in the bright half Rohiṇī (i.e. the fourth lunar mansion) appears, that is called Jayantī. That day removes also sins. Viṣṇu worshipped on that day certainly washes sins, small or great, committed during (previous) seven existences. When on the Dvādaśī in the bright half Puṣya (i.e. the eighth lunar mansion) appears, then that will be the very meritorious Pāpanāśinī. (The religious merit of him) who every day gives a prastha of sesamum-seeds (to a brāhmaṇa) for the (whole) year, and (the religious merit of him) who observes a fast on that day (i.e. on the Pāpanāśinī) are said to be equal. Viṣṇu, the lord of all, the lord of the world, being pleased, appears actually (i.e. in person) only, and endless fruit is said (to be obtained by him who observes a fast) on that (day). Viṣṇu who was won over and worshipped on that (day) by Sagara, Kakutstha and Nahuṣa, gave (them) everything on the earth. There is no doubt that he (who observes a fast on that day) is freed from the sin due to speech, mental sin or especially bodily sin committed during the seven (previous) existences. A man having fasted on that (Pāpanāśinī) alone, which is joined with the star Puṣya, obtains the fruit of (having fasted on) a thousand Ekādaśīs. Whatever like a bath, (giving a) gift, muttering (of hymns), a sacrifice, self-study, worship of a deity, is done on that day is said to give an inexhaustible fruit.

17b-18. Therefore, those who desire the fruit (like salvation) should observe (a fast on) this (day) carefully. When Yudhiṣṭhira had the ablution after the fifth horse-sacrifice, he, the religious-minded one, asked Kṛṣṇa, the scion of the Yadu family:

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

19. O lord, O Janārdana, tell me all that, viz. what religious merit or what fruit (is obtained) by observing a fast on eating only at night or eating once (a day).

The lord said:

20-27a. In the cold season, when the auspicious month of Mārgaśīrṣa has come, a man should fast on that Dvādaśī which (comes) in the dark half, O son of Pṛthā (i.e. O son of Kuntī, O Yudhiṣṭhira). Knowing what 'nakta' is, a man, with a pure heart and of a firm vow, eating (only) once on the tenth, and being controlled, (should eat) during the eighth part of the day when the Sun is feeble (i.e. is setting). That should be known as 'nakta'. 'Nakta' is not eating only at night. Nakta is enjoined for a householder before the stars appear (in the sky). The nakta for an ascetic is eating only in the eighth part of the day. Eating at night is prohibited for him. Then, O Yudhiṣṭhira, he who has taken the vow, should make the religious observance in the morning, so also in the mid-day, and being pure, should bathe. Bathing in a temporary well is the lowest; bathing in a well is of a middling quality. Bathing in a tank is excellent. Bathing in a river is still better. O Yudhiṣṭhira, the sin and the religious merit are equal when a bath is taken in the water where living beings are troubled. Bathing at home is excellent, and the water should purify (him). Therefore, O best (or eldest) of the Pāṇḍavas, a man should bathe in his house.

27b-32. (At that time he should pray:) 'O you earth, that are stepped over by horses, gone over by chariots and by Viṣṇu, remove the sin that has been collected by me in (my) former (existence)'. He should give up anger and greed. He should think of one thing only, and be of a firm vow. He should not talk to a Śūdra, so also to heretics, so also to those given to lying, so also to those who censure brāhmaṇas, and to others of bad behaviour, to those who take away others' wealth, and to those who are adulters. Having worshipped Viṣṇu, he should make articles of food offered; and with a devoted mind he should offer lights in the house. O Pārtha, on that day he should avoid sleep and sexual union. He should pass the entire day in recreation by means of sacred texts.

33-39. O best king, he, being full of devotion, should keep awake during the night, should give presents to brāhmaṇas, and should, after having saluted them, apologise to them. He should get observed (i.e. observe) the Ekādaśī (vow) during the bright

half as during the dark half (of the month). He should not differentiate between (the two Ekādaśīs). Listen to the fruit of (i.e. obtained by) him who does like this. A man, after bathing at Śaṁkhoddhāra and after seeing (the image of) god Viṣṇu, does not deserve (i.e. obtain) even the sixteenth part (of the merit) of fasting on an Ekādaśī day. O best king, a man who gives four lakhs (of coins) on the days of the passage of the Sun from one Zodiacal sign to another, does not deserve (i.e. obtain) even the sixteenth part (of the merit) of fasting on an Ekādaśī day. Indeed he who observes a fast on an Ekādaśī day, gets the same fruit as the religious merit that is due to (the bath) during the lunar eclipse or the solar eclipse at the holy place Prabhāsa. Rebirth is not had by him after he has drunk water at Kedāra. In the same way, O Yudhiṣṭhira, it removes staying in a womb.

40-48. The religious merit that he who observes a fast on an Ekādaśī day gets, is a hundredfold more than the fruit that he would get from a horse-sacrifice on the earth. The religious merit of him who fasts on an Ekādaśī day is a hundred times more that the religious merit he would obtain by giving a thousand cows to (a brāhmaṇa) who has mastered the Vedas. Those who fast on the Ekādaśī day are equal to those in whose bodies live the three deities Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. Those who are devotees (of Viṣṇu) and who worship Viṣṇu, are those who perform virtuous deeds. So also the religious merit of (i.e. due to) the vow of Ekādaśī cannot be counted. This would be its religious merit which is difficult to be obtained even by gods. Half the religious merit of this is obtained even through eating at night only. Men would have half the religious merit of this through eating once (a day). Sacred places, gifts, restraints roar till that time till a living being (i.e. a human being) would not fast on a day dear to Viṣṇu. Therefore, O best Pāṇḍava, observe this vow. O Pāṇḍava, I do not know the quantity of religious merit (about) which you are asking me. O Pāṇḍava, I have narrated to you the excellent vow, which should be kept secret. Even the performance of a thousand sacrifices is not equal to the Ekādaśī (vow).

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

49. O god, how has this auspicious Ekādaśī day come up? How is it pure in the universe and how is it dear to deities?

The lord said:

50-54. O Pārtha, formerly in the Kṛta-age there was a demon by name Mura. He was very wonderful, very fierce and caused fear to all gods. O king, even Indra, and so also other gods were vanquished by that death(-like), great, wicked demon. Driven out of the heaven they roamed on the earth. With uncertainty and full of fear, all of them went to the great god, and Indra told everything to the great lord (i.e. Śiva). (He said:) "O great god, the gods fallen from the heaven are roaming on the earth and they who are staying among the mortals, do not shine (at all). O god, tell me the remedy. What course do (i.e. should) the gods follow?"

Mahādeva said:

55-58. O You best among gods, O lord of gods, go there where he, the eagle-bannered (god), the lord of the world, the protector, and the best resort dwells. O best among gods, he will protect you.

O Yudhiṣṭhira, on having heard the words of the lord, the very intelligent king of the gods went there along with the gods. Seeing the god, the Disc-holder (i.e. Viṣṇu) sleeping in the water, Indra joined the palms of his hands, uttered (this hymn of praise):

Indra said:

59-65. Salutation to you, O lord of the gods, O you who are saluted by gods and demons, O you enemy of the demons, O you lotus-eyed one, O Madhusūdana, protect us. O lord of the world, all gods frightened by the demon (Mura) have come to seek your refuge. O you to whom your devotees are dear, protect me. O lord of gods, protect us; O Janārdana, protect us, protect us. O you lotus-eyed one, O you destroyer of the demons, protect us. We all have approached you. You alone are our refuge, O lord. O lord, help the gods who have sought your shelter. O god, you are the master; you are the intellect; you are the agent; you are the cause. You are the mother of all the people. You are the father of the world. O holy one, O

lord of gods, O you who love those who seek your shelter; the deities that are frightened, have sought your refuge. O lord, all the deities have been vanquished. All of them have been expelled from heaven by the very fierce and very vigorous demon named Mura.

Hearing the words of Indra, Viṣṇu said (these words):

The lord said:

66. O Indra, of what kind is the demon? Of what form is he? Of what kind is his might? Where is the place of that wicked one? What is his strength? What is his valour? What is precious about him? O you very intelligent one, tell me (that).

Indra said:

67-75. O lord of gods, formerly there was a very fierce, great demon named Tālajaṅgha (who was) born in the family of Brahmā. His son, the demon Mura, was well-known. He was very mighty, very powerful and fearful to gods. (There was) a city by name Candrāvatī. He lived in that place. He vanquished all gods, and expelled them from heaven. He installed another Indra (as the chief of gods), so also (another) Vāyu and (another) Agni. He fashioned other (i.e. new) Moon and Sun, so also Vāyu and Varuṇa. He took possession of everything. O Janārdana, (this is) the truth, (the only) truth. He made the world of gods bereft of all holy places.

Hearing these words of him (i.e. of Indra), the angry Viṣṇu (said): "I shall kill the wicked demon, fearful to the gods." Then the god, along with (other) gods went to the city of Candrāvatī. The gods saw the demon roaring repeatedly. He vanquished all gods. They went in the ten directions. Seeing Viṣṇu the demon said: "Wait, wait." The lord, with his eyes red due to anger, said to him:

The lord said:

76-84. O demon, O you of a bad conduct, see (the power of) my arm.

Then all the wicked demons that were before him were struck

by Viṣṇu with divine arrows. They were overcome with fear. O Pāṇḍava, Kṛṣṇa (i.e. Viṣṇu) discharged his disc against the forces of the demon. Hundreds (of demons) were cut off by it, and many died. Only one demon fought there repeatedly. He made all the gods flee and vanquished Viṣṇu. Then (of him who was) vanquished by the demon, a close fight with the demon took place. He fought that close fight for a thousand divine years. Viṣṇu became thoughtful. All gods had fled. Viṣṇu was vanquished. He went to Badarikāśrama. There was a cave named Siṁhavatī. Viṣṇu slept there (i.e. in it). O Pāṇḍava, it was twelve yojanas (in length) and had one door (only). He entered it and slept (there). The demon was bent on killing him.[1] He was tired due to that great battle, (and had slept there) through his divine power. The demon pursued him.[2] He then entered that cave. Seeing him (i.e. seeing Viṣṇu) asleep there, the demon was delighted. Thinking Viṣṇu to have been vanquished like this and to have been entered (i.e. overpowered) by fear, (he thought:) 'I shall undoubtedly kill him, the cause of fear to the demons.'

85-90. O Yudhiṣṭhira, then a maiden came out of Viṣṇu's body. She was beautiful, very auspicious, and had divine missiles and weapons. She, of a great might and valour, came up from a portion of his lustre. O Dhanañjaya, she was seen by that lord of demons, Mura by name. He directed a fight there. The maiden also had asked for it. The maiden skilled in all (kinds of) battle, fought there. The great demon by name Mura was reduced to ash due to (her) huṁkāra sound. When the demon was killed, the god (Viṣṇu) woke up. Seeing the demon fallen (dead) he was amazed: 'who has killed this fierce and very cruel enemy of me? (That person) has done a very ferocious deed through compassion for me.'

The maiden said:

91-93a. He having conquered gods, gandharvas, yakṣas and goblins, so also Indra and others, expelled them from heaven. I saw Viṣṇu asleep, and Mura had pursued him. (I thought:) 'He will destroy the three worlds when Viṣṇu is asleep.'

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1. and 2. *mām* appears to be a wrong word here. It should have been *tam*.

Hearing those words of her, Viṣṇu, spoke (these) words: "How is it that you vanquished him too who had defeated me?"

Ekādaśī said:

93b. O lord, due to your favour I killed the great demon.

The lord said:

94. In the three worlds sages and deities are delighted. O auspicious one, tell me what you like in your mind (i.e. what your mind likes). There is no doubt that I shall give it even if it is very difficult to be obtained by gods.

Ekādaśī said:

95-96. If O god, you are pleased, and if you have told the truth, O Janārdana, I desire one boon in (i.e. from) my heart, O lord of the world. O lord of gods, I shall ask for what is desired by me. O lord, O master of the world, if (your offer is) true, then give me three utterances (i.e. repeat your offer thrice).

The lord said:

97. O you of a good vow, I have certainly spoken the truth, I have made three utterances (i.e. I have repeated my promise three times). Now there would be no absence of promise (i.e. the promise will not be false).

Ekādaśī said:

98-101. O lord of gods, do for me what is proper in the three worlds, in the four ages and everywhere in the three worlds. Through your favour I shall be the chief of all sacred places, the destroyer of all difficulties, and one who brings about all (kinds of) well-being. If, O lord, you are pleased with me, then, may they who through devotion (for me) and devotion for you, fast on my day, have all (kinds) of well-being. O Viṣṇu, give wealth, righteousness and salvation to him who observes a fast or a *nakta* or who eats once a day (on the day sacred to me).

Viṣṇu said:

102-110. O auspicious one, all that you say will take place. O good one, you will grant all desires. (This will) not be other-

wise. My devotees who in the world will observe the Ekādaśī vow and worship me in Kārtika will undoubtedly obtain salvation.

O lord, the Ekādaśī is famous in the four ages and the three worlds. I look upon you as a power. The third, the eighth, the ninth, the fourteenth, and especially this eleventh are dear to Viṣṇu. (A man who observes the Ekādaśī vow gets) religious merit more than (obtained) from all the sacred places. This is true, undoubtedly true. He gave this vow to her repeating it thrice. There was no doubt about it. The Ekādaśī of a great vow became glad and strong. 'You will kill his (i.e. the observer's) enemy. You will give him the highest position. You, giving (all kinds of) welfare, will remove all difficulties. O Yudhiṣṭhira, the Ekādaśī of both the fortnights is equal (in merit) and is auspicious. A man should not differentiate between the bright and the dark (Ekādaśī of the bright half and that of the dark half). He should devoutly listen to (pious accounts) by day or at night. For both the fortnights the same day (i.e. Ekādaśī) would be the full (day). At the sunrise the Ekādaśī day is little (i.e. is in a small part). At the end of the vow is the Trayodaśī (i.e. the thirteenth day).

111-114a. In between (the two) there is the full Dvādaśī (i.e. the twelfth day). Thus that (Ekādaśī-vow) which touches (these) three (days) is dear to Viṣṇu. If a man fasts on one (Ekādaśi he would get the) fruit of (having observed) a thousand Ekādaśīs. This would be thousandfold if the fast is broken on Dvādaśī. Aṣṭamī, Ekādaśī, Ṣaṣṭhī, Tṛtīyā and Caturdaśī, mixed with the previous day, should not be observed (as fast days). A man should observe (a fast on any one of these) when mixed with the next day. If the Ekādaśī lasts for a day and night and would continue for a ghaṭikā in the (next) morning, that day should be avoided. That Ekādaśī, along with Dvādaśī, should be fasted on.

114b-118. Thus, I have told you about the Ekādaśī falling in both the fortnights. There is no doubt that a man should observe a fast on the Ekādaśī day. They (i.e. who observe this fast) go to the place of Viṣṇu where the eagle-bannered (god Viṣṇu) dwells. Those men who are absorbed in devotion for Viṣṇu are blessed in the world. That man who would at all

times recite the importance of the Ekādaśī(-vow), obtains the religious merit which is the fruit (of the gift) of a thousand cows. There is no doubt that those who devoutly listen to it by day or at night are freed from the sins of killing a brāhmaṇa etc. O best king, the (exposition of) the significance of the Gītā is not equal to devotion to Viṣṇu. There is no other vow like that of the Ekādaśī, that destroys sins.

CHAPTER THIRTYNINE

The Importance of the Mokṣadā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1-3. I salute Viṣṇu who is actually the lord, who gives happiness to the three worlds, who is the lord of the universe, the author of everything, the ancient Puruṣottama. O lord of gods, I ask (because) I have a great doubt (and also) for the well-being of the world and for the destruction of sins. O master, tell me in detail and properly, about the manner in which that Ekādaśī[1] which would fall in the bright half of Mārgaśīrṣa, is observed and which deity is worshipped (on that day).

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

4-17. O king, you have asked well. Your spotless fame is excellent. O lord of kings, I shall tell you about the excellent day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu. The Dvādaśī that has come up in the dark half of Mārgaśīrṣa is dear to me. (This one) called Mārgaśīrṣa-utpatti has sprung up from my body. O best among

1. From this chapter onwards the Ekādaśīs falling in each of the two fortnights of a month are described. The months are said to end with the full-moon day.

To the north of the Narmadā, a month is generally considered to end with the full-moon day, while in other parts of the country, the month is supposed to end with the new-moon day. The bright half is the same. That half of the month which is the dark half of Caitra according to the practice followed to the north of Narmadā, is the dark half of the Vaiśākha month in other parts of the country.

the Bharatas, it has sprung up for killing the gods (?) and demons. O best king, I have told about it to you. The day previous (to this) in the dark half of the (month of) Mārgaśīrṣa is called Utpatti Ekādeśī in the three worlds with the mobile and the immobile. Hereafter I shall describe the one that falls in the bright half of Mārgaśīrṣa, by hearing about which a man would obtain the fruit of the Vājapeya (sacrifice). It is great, is called by the name Mokṣadā and removes all sins. A man should carefully worship Dāmodara (i.e. Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu, on this day), O king. (He should worship Viṣṇu) carefully with the Tulasī-sprouts, according to the manner (told) before. This Ekādaśī (having on that day a portion of) Daśamī also, is called Mokṣā (i.e. Mokṣadā) Ekādaśī. It destroys great sins. At night he should keep awake with dances, songs and my eulogies. O king, listen. I shall tell you a divine, ancient story, by merely hearing which all sins would perish. There is no doubt that due to the religious merit that it gives, the (dead) forefathers (of a man) that have, due to (their) sins, gone to (i.e. born in) a mean stock, go to (i.e. obtain) salvation. In the city (called) Campaka which was adorned with Viṣṇu's devotees, there (lived) a king Vaikhānasa by name. He would (i.e. he did) look after his subjects like his own sons. (In the city) lived many brāhmaṇas who had mastered the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. The subjects of that king Vaikhānasa were prosperous. O king, he was ruling over his kingdom like this. He (once) saw at night in a dream his own forefathers gone to a mean stock. He, seeing all of them like this, with his mind full of amazement, told the account that took place in the dream to brāhmaṇas.

The king said:

18-23. O brāhmaṇas, I saw my forefathers gone to hell, and saying to me: "O you born of our bodies, emancipate us from this ocean of hell." I saw them speaking like this and weeping repeatedly, O best brāhmaṇas. Due to this I am unhappy. This great kingdom does not give me pleasure. O brāhmaṇas, I am not pleased with all the horses and the elephants. O best brāhmaṇas, my wife and sons do not please me. What do (i.e. should) I do? O best brāhmaṇas, tell me about that vow, that practice of penance, by means of which my

ancestors will go to (i.e. obtain) salvation. What is the fruit (i.e. use) of that son who is living richly, who is mighty and magnanimous, when his father lives in a fearful hell?'

The brāhmaṇas said:

24-29. The great hermitage of the sage Parvata who knows the past and the future, is nearby. O best king, go to that hermitage.

Then hearing (these) words of them, the great king Vaikhānasa quickly went to the hermitage of Parvata. The king was surrounded by brāhmaṇas and accompanied by (other) kings. The best king reached his (i.e. Parvata's) extensive hermitage. Having seen the best sage like another Brahmā, surrounded by sages well-versed in the study of Ṛgveda, Yajurveda and Sāmaveda, king Vaikhānasa saluted the sage (by prostrating before him) in the manner of a staff and touched his feet. The sage asked him about the welfare of the seven constituent[1] parts of the kingdom, so also about the absence of trouble in the kingdom and the king's happiness.

The king said:

30-38. O master, by your favour there is well-being in the seven constituent parts of my kingdom. How can those who are devoted to Viṣṇu and brāhmaṇas, have (any) difficulty? I saw in a dream my ancestors living in hell. O master, I have come to you to clear the doubt, O best brāhmaṇa, as to which religious merit will give them salvation. O best sage, some remedy should be adopted in this case.

Having heard these words from him, Parvata, the best sage, the ascetic, resembling Brahmā, fixed his eyes in meditation. Remaining in meditation for a short time, he replied to the king: "O lord of kings, I have understood the former acts of your ancestors. In his previous existence, your father, a kṣatriya, was proud of his kingdom. Prompted by his royal duty and

1. Saptāṅgāni: The seven constituents of a kingdom are: the king, the minister, the allies, the treasury, the territory, the fortress, and the army.

seeking to gain his object, he, leaving his wife behind in the time favourable for conception, went to a village. Your father did not give her (what should be given to his wife) during the period favourable for conception (i.e. did not copulate with her). As a result of that sin, O best king, your father, along with your ancestors, fell into a very terrible hell." After that king Vaikhānasa again said to the sage: "O sage, by to the power of which vow would they have salvation?"

The sage said:

39-47. In the bright half of Mārgaśīrṣa there is the Mokṣā (or *Mokṣadā Ekādaśī*). All should observe this vow, and (its) religious merit should be given to a (dead) father (i.e. ancestor). By the efficacy of that religious merit they will have salvation. O glorious one, this is true since it is the statement of Brahmā.

Having heard the words of the sage he again came back to his house. And then the month of Mārgaśīrṣa also came. King Vaikhānasa, having observed the vow with effort, gave, along with all, its religious merit to his father. When the religious merit was given, just in a moment, shower of flowers occurred from the sky; and Vaikhānasa's father, along with his ancestors, entered (i.e. obtained) salvation. And from the sky he (i.e. the father) spoke (these) auspicious words: "O son, may it be well with you, may it be well with you." Speaking thus he went to heaven. O king, the sins of him who observes the auspicious (vow of) the Mokṣā (i.e. Mokṣadā) Ekādaśī, perish, and after death he would obtain salvation. There cannot be any Ekādaśī superior to this one, that would give (one) salvation. O king, I do not know the measure of religious merit (it gives). O king, this is the vow of him who does good to me. This (vow) is like the desire-yielding gem. It gives salvation to men. A man would get the fruit (of the performance) of a Vājapeya sacrifice by reading about and listening to it.

CHAPTER FORTY

Saphalā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. Which Ekādaśī would take place (i.e. fall) in the dark half of Pauṣa? What is the name and the manner of observing it? Tell this to me in detail, O master; tell me which deity is worshipped on that day.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-14. O lord of kings, due to the bond of affection (between us) I shall tell (it to you). O king, I am not so much pleased with sacrifice in which profuse gifts are given, as I am pleased with the Ekādaśī-vow. Therefore, with all efforts, the day of Viṣṇu should be observed (as the day of vow). O you famous among the most religious, this is true, not false. On the Ekādaśī day falling in the dark half of Pauṣa and called Saphalā, a man should duly worship god Viṣṇu. This auspicious Ekādaśī should be observed in the same manner as told before. O king, as Śeṣa is (the best) of the serpents, as (Garuḍa) the eater of serpents is (the best) of the birds, as Viṣṇu is (the best) of the deities, as brāhmaṇa is (the best) of the bipeds, so the day of Ekādaśī is the best of the vows. O king, those men who are devoted to the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, and observe the vow of Ekādaśī, are always venerable to me. They are united with wealth here (i.e. in this world) only, and after death they obtain salvation. O king, on (the day of) the Saphalā (Ekādaśī) a man should worship Viṣṇu by uttering his (various) names, with coconuts, betel-nuts, citron-fruits, jambīra-fruits, pomegranates, and auspicious dhātrī-fruits, so also with cloves, badari-fruits and especially with mangoes. So also he should worship the lord of gods with incense and lights. Especially on the Saphalā (day) he should cause to be given (i.e. should give) the present of lights. He should keep awake along with Viṣṇu's devotees during (that) night. O king, listen to the religious merit of him, of a concentrated mind, who keeps awake during that night (just) for (the time of) the twinkling of an eye. No sacrifice is equal to that. There is

no sacred place like that. All (other) vows do not deserve (i.e. are not equal to even) the sixteenth part (of the Saphalā-vow), O lord of kings.

15-23. He who thus keeps awake, gets the fruit which cannot be obtained by (practising) penance for thousands of years. O best king, listen to the auspicious account of the Saphalā. There was a city of (i.e. belonging to) Māhiṣmata well-known as Campāvatī. That royal sage had five young sons. Of them the eldest was always engaged in (committing) sins. He was an adulterer, fond of prostitutes and a drunkard. The sinner spent his father's money in that only. He was always engaged in bad behaviour and censured brāhmaṇas. He always censured Viṣṇu's devotees and deities. Noticing his son to be like this, king Māhiṣmata called him, among the sons, by the name Lumpaka (i.e. a robber). His father and brothers expelled him from the kingdom. He was thus abandoned like an obstructor by the attendants also. Lumpaka also, who was abandoned like that, then thought: 'I have indeed been expelled from the kingdom by my kinsmen and my father.' Thinking like this he set his heart on (committing) sins. 'I must go to a fearful, dense forest; and from it I shall plunder the entire city of my father.'

24-31a. Thinking like this, Lumpaka, by a lucky coincidence, went out of that city, and went into that dense forest. He was always engaged in killing living beings. He was the treasure of the arts of stealing and gambling. That sinner plundered the entire city. He, moving in the city for stealing, was arrested by night-stalkers. To them he said: "I am the son of king Māhiṣmata." He who committed sinful deeds was released by them, and again came (back) to the forest. He was fond of to (eating) flesh and fruits. Near that wicked man there was the abode of Viṣṇu. There was an old Aśvattha tree (standing there) for many years. The tree had great divineness in the forest. That Lumpaka, of a sinful mind, living just there, ate, after many days had passed, fruits of trees due to some collection of (his) religious merit on the tenth day of the dark half of Pauṣa.

31b-38. Lumpaka who was the most sinful, was oppressed by heat. He was without clothes and lost his sight. Being oppressed by severe cold, he did not enjoy the pleasure of sleep near that tree of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu. He was as it were dead.

Covering his mouth (i.e. his lips) with his teeth, he passed the entire night. Even at sunrise, the most sinful one did not (re-) gain consciousness. (Thus) Lumpaka remained unconscious on that day of Saphalā. When the Sun was in the middle (of the sky) that Lumpaka got (back) consciousness. He looked here and there; was pained; and tumbling from his seat, he again and again walked like a lame man with his feet. He went into the middle part (i.e. the interior) of the forest, was emaciated by hunger and was oppressed. That Lumpaka, of a wicked mind, did not have strength to kill a living being. O king, at that time that Lumpaka did not obtain fruits. When he came there, the Sun had set. 'O pity, what will happen (to me)?' Like this he wailed. There, at the root of the tree he placed many fruits and said:

39-44a. "May Viṣṇu be pleased with these fruits." Having spoken like this Lumpaka did not get sleep on (that) night. Viṣṇu regarded his (sleeplessness as) keeping awake at night (in his honour), and took the placing of fruits as being worshipped with fruits (on the day) of Saphalā. That Lumpaka observed this vow accidentally only. By the power of that religious merit he obtained the kingdom free from troubles. Till it was sunrise, Viṣṇu went to heaven. At that time a divine voice was heard: "By the favour of Saphalā, O son, you will obtain the kingdom." When he said "All right", he became one of a divine form. O king, he had a great inclination towards Viṣṇu.

44b-49. He, rich with divine ornaments, obtained the kingdom which was free from trouble. He ruled over the kingdom for fifteen years. By the favour of Kṛṣṇa he had charming sons and a (charming) wife. Having quickly abandoned his kingdom and having given it to his son, he went to Kṛṣṇa's proximity, going where a man does not meet with grief. O king, he who observes the excellent vow of Saphalā in this way, gets happiness in this world, and after death would obtain salvation. Those men who are engrossed in (the vow of) Saphalā, are blessed. Their existence is fruitful. No doubt should be raised about this. A man, by reciting, listening to and observing the (vow of Saphalā) obtains the fruit of a Rājasūya-sacrifice, O king.

CHAPTER FORTYONE

Putradā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1-2. O Kṛṣṇa, you have told (me about) the auspicious (vow of) the Saphalā Ekādaśī. Favour me and tell me about the one that would fall in the bright fortnight (of the month of Pauṣa). What is its name? What is the manner of it (i.e. in which way is it) to be observed ? Which is the deity that is propitiated on that (day)? With whom are you, Puruṣottama himself, pleased?

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

3-12. O king, listen, I shall tell (you about) the one that would fall in the bright half (of Pauṣa). O great king, with a desire for the good of the people, I shall tell about it. O king, it is to be carefully observed in the manner (as told) before. Its name is Putradā. It is great, and removes all sins. Its superintending deity is Viṣṇu. He gives (all) desired objects and all prosperity. No greater (vow) than this (exists) in the three worlds with the mobile and the immobile. Viṣṇu makes a man possessed with knowledge and makes him successful. O king, listen. I shall tell you an auspicious tale that removes sins. Formerly there lived king Suketumat in the city of Bhadrāvatī. His queen was Campakā by name. The sonless king passed his time in (entertaining) desires. The king did not obtain a son who would continue his line. Then the king thought of righteous deeds for a long time. 'What should I do? Where should I go? How can I have a son?' King Suketumat did not derive pleasure from his kingdom or his city. Every day, along with his chaste wife, he became unhappy. The couple was always full of anxiety and grief. His (dead) ancestors drank lukewarm water offered by him. 'We do not see anybody who will gratify us after the king'. Thinking like this his manes were unhappy.

13-19a. The king did not find pleasure in his kinsmen, allies, ministers, friends, so also elephants, horses and foot-soldiers. Despondency always prevailed in the king's mind. 'A man who is without a son does not get the fruit of his existence. The house of a sonless person is always desolate. His heart is always

unhappy. Without a son freedom from the debt of (one's) ancestors, deities and men is not possible. Therefore, with all efforts a man should produce a son. Those with religious merit, in whose house a son would be born, get success in this world, and an auspicious position in the next world. In the house of those men who practise righteous deeds long life, (good) health, and wealth prevail. O king, (these) cannot be had without religious merit and devotion to Viṣṇu. I think that sons are certainly the wealth (of a person).'

19b-31. Thinking like this the king did not get happiness. King Suketumat thought (like this) in the early morning and at night. He thought of destroying himself. Then the king, seeing misfortune in (i.e. due to) suicide, saw his body fallen and his sonlessness. Then according to his intellect, he saw (i.e. thought about) his welfare. Then the king mounted upon a horse, went to a dense forest. The family-priest and others did not know (that) the king had gone. In the dense forest resorted to by beasts and birds, the king roamed, observing the forest-trees like vaṭa, aśvattha, bilva, kharjūra, and panasa, so also bakula, saptaparṇa, tinduka, and tila. The king also saw (trees like) śāla, tamāla and sarala. (He also saw) trees like iṅgudī, kakubha, śleṣmātaka, sallaka, karamarda, pāṭala and badara also. He also saw aśoka (trees), palāśa (trees), wolves, hares, wild cats, buffaloes, porcupines and camara (deer). The king saw serpents that had half come out from the ant-hills, and wild intoxicated elephants with their young ones. (He saw) lords of herds having four tusks and accompanied by the female elephants and herds. Seeing the elephants of him, the king thought: 'The lord moving among them obtained great beauty.' The king observed the forest full of great wonders. Hearing on his way the cries of jackals and of owls, and seeing various bears and deer, he roamed in the forest.

32-36a. In this way the king saw the forest. When the Sun had gone to the middle (of the sky), he being oppressed with hunger and thirst, ran here and there. The king with his throat and neck dry thought: 'What deed have I done (by which) I have met with such grief? With sacrifices and worships I have pleased the deities. I have pleased brāhmaṇas with gifts and desired meals. I have always greatly looked after my subjects

like my (own) son. Due to what have I met with this great, terrible distress?' The king who was thinking like this, went ahead in the forest.

36b-42. By the efficacy of his good deeds, he saw an excellent lake. It was being touched by (i.e. had the contact of) fish. It looked very beautiful due to lotuses. It also looked beautiful with ducks, ruddy geese and royal swans. It was full of many alligators, fishes and other aquatic animals. The fortunate king saw many hermitages of sages near the lake, along with many omens suggesting auspiciousness. His right eye throbbed. So also his right hand, indicating auspicious fruit, throbbed. Seeing on its lake sages muttering Vedic prayers in an undertone, the king stood in front of the sages. The king saluted separately (i.e. individually) the sages of praise-worthy vows by joining the palms of his hands and repeatedly prostrating before them in the manner of a staff. The sages also said (to him): "O king, we are pleased with you."

The king said:

43. Who are you here? Tell me what your names are. Why have you assembled here? Tell the truth to me.

The sages said:

44-45. O king, we are Viśvedevāḥ.[1] We have come here for a bath. Māgha has come near (i.e. will commence) on the fifth day from today. O king, today is Ekādaśī called Putradā. Viṣṇu gives a son to those who observe this (Ekādaśī), O king.

The king said:

46. I have a great uncertainty about producing a son. If you are pleased, then give me a son.

The sages said:

47-53. O king, today only it is the Ekādaśī called Putradā. Do this well-known vow, which is the best (vow). O lord of

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1. Viśvedevāḥ: Name of a particular group of deities, ten in number, and supposed to be sons of Viśvā. Their names are: Vasu, Satya, Kratu, Dakṣa Kāla, Kāma, Dhṛti, Kuru, Purūravas, and Mādravas.

kings, after ablution and by the favour of us and of Viṣṇu, you will certainly have a son.

By these words of them, and the advice of the sages, the king observed the excellent vow which is (that of) Putradā, according to the (proper) rules. Having broken his fast on Dvādaśī the king came home. Then the queen conceived. At the time of her delivery a bright son was born. By means of his righteous deeds he pleased his father. He became a king (later). Therefore, O king, the excellent vow of Putradā should be observed. I told it to you for the good of the people. Those who, with a concentrated mind, observe this Putradā vow, obtain sons in this world and after death go to heaven. O king, by reciting and listening to it, a man would obtain the fruit of (having performed) the Agniṣṭoma sacrifice.

CHAPTER FORTYTWO

The Vow of Ṣaṭtilā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1-2. Very nice, O Kṛṣṇa, O Jagannātha, O first god, O lord of the world. Be pleased, and tell me. Show favour to me. Which would be the Ekādaśī in the dark half of Māgha? What is the manner in which it is to be observed? Tell me this in detail.

The lord said:

3-4. O best king, listen. That Ekādaśī which would fall in the dark half of Māgha is known as Ṣaṭtilā and destroys all sins. Listen to the auspicious, sin-removing account of Ṣaṭtilā, which the best sage Pulastya narrated to Dālabhya.

Dālabhya said:

5-7. O brāhmaṇa, tell that truly (to me) how those living beings who have come to the mortal world, who commit sins, and are having various sins like the murder of a brāhmaṇa, who take away others' wealth, who are deluded by great addictions,

do not go to hell. O glorious one, (please) tell me (how) sin perishes (even) by means of some small gift.

Pulastya said:

8-15a. Very nice, very nice, O you illustrious one, this is a secret, very difficult to be had. I shall tell it, O best brāhmaṇa, as I am asked by you, which is not told to anyone by deities like Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Indra. When the month of Māgha has arrived, a man being pure after bath, and with his senses curbed, and without lust, anger, pride, jealousy, greed and wickedness, having remembered the gods, having washed his feet with water, should take the cowdung fallen on the ground, scatter sesamum-seeds, cotton and should get fashioned balls one hundred and eight (in number). No doubt should be raised in this matter. Then when the month of Māgha has come, and if the Āṣāḍha star appears (in the sky) or if it is the beginning of the dark half, he should observe the restraints of Ekādaśī at an auspicious time. Listen to the manner (as) I (tell you). Having worshipped the god of gods, having bathed well, being restrained and pure, he should, by fasting on the Ekādaśī day, recite the names of Kṛṣṇa. He should keep awake at night, and should get performed a sacrifice first.

15b-20a. Again on the second day he should worship Viṣṇu, the lord of the lordly gods. Along with sandal, agaru, and camphor, he should offer eatables and a mixture of rice and peas with a few spices. Then remembering the lord by (uttering) his name, he should repeatedly offer to (the deity) called Kṛṣṇa respectful offering full of pumpkin gourds, coconuts or citrons. In the absence of all (these) (he should make the respectful offering) with betel-nuts, after properly worshipping Janārdana (i.e. Viṣṇu). "O Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, you are kind. Be the refuge of those who have no refuge. O Viṣṇu, favour them who are plunged in the ocean of mundane existence. Salutation to you, O lotus-eyed one; salutation to you, the creator of all; salutation to you, O Subrahmaṇya, O ancestor of great men. O lord of the world, accept, along with Lakṣmī, this offering, which is made by me." (This is) the hymn recited at the time of making a respectful offering. O brāhmaṇa, after that he should worship (the deity)

and should cause to be given (to it) an earthen pitcher along with an umbrella, sandals and garments. (He should say:)

20b-23. "May Kṛṣṇa be pleased with me." A dark cow should be given according to his capacity to the best brāhmaṇa. O best brāhmaṇa, he, expert in recognizing a worthy recipient, should give him a pot full of sesamum seeds. O sage, the black sesamum seeds are recommended for bath and food. He should with effort give them to the best brāhmaṇa according to his capacity. For as many thousands of years as many sprouts from the sesamum seeds are there is the field, he is honoured in heaven. These six uses of sesamum seeds destroy sins: bathing with the sesamum seeds (i.e. with water mixed with them), rubbing (one's body) with sesamum seeds, offering a sacrifice with sesamum seeds, offering water with sesamum seeds, giving sesamum seeds, and eating them.

Nārada (Yudhiṣṭhira?) said:

24-25. O Kṛṣṇa, O Kṛṣṇa, O you of mighty arms, O you the creator of everything, salutation to you. What kind of fruit is due to the Ṣaṭtilā Ekādaśī? Tell it to me, O Yādava, along with an episode, if you are pleased with me.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

26-32. O king, listen to what I saw as it took place. O Nārada(?), in the mortal world formerly there lived a brāhmaṇa woman. She was always engaged in observing vows and was always engrossed in worshipping deities. She was engaged in observing the monthly fasts; she was very devoted to me. She observed fasts in honour of Kṛṣṇa, and was intent on worshipping me. O best brāhmaṇa(?), she tormented her body with fasts. The very chaste woman always offered her house etc. due to her devotion to gods, brāhmaṇas and maidens. O brāhmaṇa(?), she always took delight in great expiation. She did not give alms to beggars; she did not gratify brāhmaṇas. Then, O brāhmaṇa(?), after a long time I thought: "There is no doubt that her body is purified by means of vows and expiations. By mortifying her body she honoured devotees of Viṣṇu. She did not offer food, by means of which great satisfaction would be had." O brāhmaṇa(?),

knowing like this, I went to the mortal world. Taking the form of a Kāpāla.[1] I begged alms in my (begging) bowl. (She said:)

33-43. "O brāhmaṇa, what for have you come? Where will you go later? Tell (this to me)." I again said: "O beautiful woman, give (me) alms." With great wrath she threw a lump of clay into the copper-vessel. Then O brāhmaṇa, I again went (back) to heaven. Then by the power of her practising the vow, the female ascetic of great vows, bodily came to heaven after a long time. Due to the gift of the lump of a clay she got a charming house; but O brāhmaṇa sage(?), it was without heaps of grains. When she would observe (i.e. she observed) the house, she did not see anything there. Then, O brāhmaṇa(?), she moved out of the house and came to me. She spoke these words full of great anger: "By means of many kinds of vows, expiations and fasts, and with worship, I propitiated the god, the guardian of the entire world. O Janārdana, nothing is seen there in my house." Then I said to her: "O you of a great vow, go home. Wives of gods, full of great curiosity and wonder will come to see you. Do not open the door unless they recite the auspicious (account of) Ṣaṭtilā." Thus addressed by me, the woman went (back to her house). O brāhmaṇa(?), in the meanwhile gods' wives came (to her house). There they said, "We have come to see you. O beautiful woman, open the door (so that) we shall see you."

The woman said:

44. If you want to see me, you must especially tell the truth —the meritorious vow of Ṣaṭtilā—for opening the door.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

45-54. None of them told her (about) the vow of *Ṣaṭtilā Ekādaśī*. Then one of them told (about) the vow of the Ṣaṭtilā Ekādaśī. The other one then said: "The woman should be seen by me." Then after opening the door, the woman was seen by them. O best brāhmaṇa(?), like that woman a goddess or a female gandharva or a demoness or a female serpent was never seen by them be-

1. Kāpāla: A follower of the Śaiva sect—the Left-hand Order characterised by carrying skulls of men in the form of garlands and eating and drinking from them.

fore. By the advice of the goddesses the vow of Ṣaṭtilā which gives pleasures and salvation was observed by that woman of a true vow. She, endowed with beauty and loveliness, obtained in a moment wealth, grains, garments, gold and silver. By the prowess of Ṣaṭtilā her house was endowed with everything. In a moment she became endowed with beauty and loveliness. One should not be very greedy; one should avoid fraud with regard to wealth. According to his wealth he should cause to give (i.e. should give) sesamum seeds and garments. A man obtains good health in very existence. He does not get poverty, or misery or misfortune. (All this) will not take place due to fasting on Ṣaṭtilā. O king, there is no doubt that a giver of sesamum seeds in this way is free from all sins without any trouble. (Giving) a gift duly to a worthy recipient removes all sins. O best king, there is no misery or exertion in the body.

CHAPTER FORTYTHREE

Jayā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1-3. O Kṛṣṇa, you have said well. O lord, you are the first god. (There are four kinds of living beings:) generated by sweat; oviparous; plants; viviparous. You make and mar them; you protect and destroy them. You told (me) about Ṣaṭtilā falling in Māgha. O god, favour (me) and tell me which Ekādaśī would fall in the bright half (of that month). What is the manner of it (i.e. the manner in which it is observed? Which deity is worshipped on that day?

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

4-8a. O lord of kings, I shall tell you about (the Ekādaśī) that would fall in the bright half of Māgha. It is called Jayā. It is well known. It is great and removes all sins. It is pure. It destroys sins. It gives desired objects and salvation to men. It destroys (the sin of) the murder of a brāhmaṇa, and it (also)

destroys the state of a goblin. Men are not reduced to the condition of ghosts when the vow of this (Ekādaśī) is observed by them. There is no (Ekādaśī) other than this that destroys sins and gives salvation. O king, for this reason it should always be observed. O best king, listen to an ancient auspicious tale. I have told about its greatness in the Padma Purāṇa.

8b-15a. Once Indra ruled in heaven. Gods happily lived in that charming (heaven). They were engaged in drinking nectar and were waited upon by celestial nymphs. In it there was a grove called Nandana. It was served by (i.e. full of) Pārijāta trees. Gods rejoice and are pleased by the celestial nymphs there. Once Indra, the lord of fifty crores (of the residents of heaven), rejoicing as he liked, joyfully made (the celestial nymphs) to dance. Gandharvas sang there. There was a gandharva (named) Puṣpadantaka. Citrasena was also there. So also there was Mālinī, the daughter of Citrasena. There was Citrasena's wife also. Puṣpadantī was born of Mālinī. Puṣpadanta's son was Mālyavat by name. Mālyavat was very much fascinated by the beauty of Puṣpadantī. She subjugated Mālyavat with her glances.

15b-22. Listen to (the description of) her charm with loveliness and her beauty. Her arms are as it were the nooses (thrown) round the neck by Cupid. Her eyes were long up to the ears, were reeling and red in the corners. Her ears looked beautiful due to the ear-rings. She had a conch-shaped neck, and was adorned with divine ornaments. Her stout and raised breasts resembled golden pitchers. Her waist was lean, excellent and could be grasped in the fist. Her buttocks were expansive. Her hips and loins were large. Her feet were beautiful and bright like red-lotus. By (that) Puṣpavatī who was like this, Mālyavat was very much fascinated. To please Indra, the two came there to dance. They sang there and were waited upon by bands of celestial nymphs. The two Puṣpadantī and Mālyavat, had their bodies filled with cupid (i.e. the feeling of love). Due to love for each other they were infatuated. With their mind perplexed they did not sing chaste songs.

23-31. Influenced by the arrows of Cupid they had rivetted their eyes upon each other. Indra knew that their minds were attached to each other. Due to the lapse in clapping of the

hands and in the measuring (of time), so also due to the execution of the song, Indra, thinking that it was an insult to him, got angry with both of them and giving them a curse said these (words): "Fie upon you; you are fallen; you stupid ones have disobeyed me. Be turned into goblins as husband and wife; go to the mortal world, enjoying the fruit of your deed." Thus cursed by Indra the two with their minds distressed, being deluded by Indra's curse reached the Himālaya mountain. Both became goblins and met with terrible grief also. Their minds were tormented, and met with misery caused by snow. Being deluded, they were not aware of their state of a gandharva or a celestial nymph. They were oppressed by summer and the effect of bodily sins. Troubled by (the fruit of) their deeds they did not get pleasure or peace at night. Talking to each other they moved in the mountain-caves. They were chattering their teeth and had horripilation on their bodies.

32-40a. Then that male goblin said to his wife, the female goblin: "What great, fierce and thrilling sin have we committed due to which we have obtained (i.e. are reduced to) goblinhood as a result of our bad deeds? Hell is looked upon as fierce, and goblinhood as painful. Therefore, with all efforts, one should not commit a sin." Thus being anxious, they were overpowered with grief. Due to their good luck, the Ekādaśī of Māgha, named Jayā and well-known as the best among days, came. When that day came, O king, they remained there without food and without drinking water. They did not kill any living being; they did not eat leaves and fruits. Near the Aśvattha tree, they remained always full of grief. O king, while they remained like that the sun set. Night, that was fierce, terrible and fatal, approached. The two, trembling and clinging to each other with their bodies and arms, then slept there on the (bare) ground. They did not have sleep, or coition, nor did they get pleasure.

40b-46. O best king, they were thus troubled by the curse of Indra. When they were thus unhappy the night rolled by. The sun rose when the day of Dvādaśī came (i.e. on the Dvādaśī day). O best king, I held in my heart (i.e. thought to myself) about their salvation. They observed the good vow of Jayā and kept awake at night. Listen to what happened by

the efficacy of that vow. When the Dvādaśī day came, and when the Jayā-vow was observed like that, their goblinhood disappeared by Viṣṇu's prowess. Puṣpadantī and Mālyavat had their forms as before. They had the same affection as before, had put on the (same) ornaments as before. They got into an aeroplane and went to the beautiful heaven. Having gone in front of the lord of gods (Indra), they gladly saluted him. Seeing them like that, Indra, being amazed said to them:

Indra said:

47. Tell me, due to what moral merit you who were reduced to goblinhood, who had received a curse from me, were freed and by which god.

Mālyavat said:

48-51. O lord, our goblinhood has gone by Viṣṇu's favour, the observance of the Jayā-vow, and the strength of devotion to you.

Hearing these (words) Indra also spoke again: "You have become sinless, pure, and have become adorable even to me. You have observed (the vow on) the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu; you are greatly attached to the devotion for Viṣṇu. There is no doubt that those mortals who adhere to (the vow of) the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, and are devoted to Kṛṣṇa, are adorable to us also."

Kṛṣṇa said:

52-54. For this reason, O king, the vow of the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu should be observed. O best king, Jayā removes the sin of a brāhmaṇa's murder. He who has observed the vow of Jayā, has given all gifts, has performed all sacrifices. He certainly rejoices in Vaikuṇṭha as long as a crore of kalpas. O king, by reciting or listening to (this account), one would obtain the fruit (of the performance) of Agniṣṭoma (sacrifice).

CHAPTER FORTYFOUR

Vijayā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. What is the name of the Ekādaśī that would fall (i.e. falls) in the dark half of Phālguna? O Vāsudeva, favour me and tell it to me.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2. Nārada asked the lotus-seated Brahmā: "O best of brāhmaṇas, favour me, and tell me about the religious merit due to the observance of the Vijayā Ekādaśī that would fall (i.e. that falls) in the dark half of Phālguna.

Brahmā said:

3-12. O Nārada, listen; I shall tell (you) a great account that removes sins. I have not narrated to anyone this Vijayā-vow which is ancient, pure, and which removes sins. There is no doubt that Vijayā gives victory to the kings. Formerly, Rāma went to the forest and lived in Pañcavaṭī for fourteen years with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa. The glorious wife, Sītā, of Rāma of a victorious nature, who lived there was kidnapped by Rāvaṇa through lustfulness. Due to that grief even Rāma was embarassed, and (while) wandering he saw Jaṭāyus who was dead. Then he, wandering in the forest, killed Kabandha. (Thẹn) his friendship with Sugrīva took place. The forces of the monkeys came together for Rāma. Then Sītā was seen in the (Aśoka) garden of Laṅkā by Hanūmat. He gave her the token of Rāma and performed a great feat. Then again having come back to Rāma, he told him the entire (account). Then Rāma, having heard the words of Hanūmat, was pleased to (take out) a march (against Rāvaṇa) with Sugrīva's consent. (He said to Lakṣmaṇa:) "O Saumitra, due to which religious merit this very unfathomable abode of Varuṇa (i.e. the ocean) full of aquatic animals, can be crossed? I do not see a means with which this (ocean) can be crossed easily."

Lakṣmaṇa said:

13-18. You alone are the first god, and the ancient, best man. In this island lives the sage Bakadālbhya. O Rāghava, his hermitage is at a distance of half a yojana from this place. O son (i.e. descendant) of Raghu, there are many other brāhmaṇas also. O best king, having gone (there), ask the best sage.

Having heard these extremely good words of Lakṣmaṇa, Rāma went to see that great sage Bakadālbhya. With his head (bent down) he saluted the sage, as a god (salutes) Viṣṇu. Then that sage having recognized that ancient best man who had entered the human body for some reason, was pleased, and said, "O Rāma what for have you come?"

Rāma said:

19-24. O brāhmaṇa, by your favour I have come along with the army to this shore of the ocean to conquer Laṅkā along with the demons. O sage, be favourable and tell me the means by which I shall cross the ocean. Now be pleased. O god, for this reason only I have come to see you.

Having heard the words of Rāma, the great sage Bakadālbhya, with his mind very much pleased, said to the lotus-eyed Rāma: "O Rāma, today you should observe the best among vows, having observed which you will be mightily victorious. Having conquered Laṅkā and the demons, you will obtain pure fame. Being concentrated in mind, observe this vow. The Vijayā Ekādaśī would fall in the dark half of the month of Phālguna.

25-35. O Rāma, by (the observance of) that vow you will get victory. You will, along with the monkeys, undoubtedly cross the ocean. O king, listen to the manner of this vow (i.e. in which the vow should be observed), which is fruitful. When the tenth day has arrived a man should cause to get fashioned a pitcher. He should place this decorated pitcher made of gold, silver, copper or clay and filled with water and with sprouts. He should put under it seven (kinds of) grains, and barley upon it. On it he should place the golden (image of) the lord Nārāyaṇa. When the eleventh day comes, he should bathe in the morning.

Along with a wreath round the neck and unguents he should keep it (the pitcher) steady. He should worship it especially with betel nuts and coconuts, so also with sandal, incense, lights and various offerings of eatables. O Rāma, the day is passed in front of it with (i.e. in narrating) good tales. A wise man should also keep awake at night in front of it. For the continuous observance of the vow he should light a lamp of ghee. When the twelfth day comes, on the rise of the sun he should take the jar to the region of water and place it in a river or into a stream and should worship it duly. He should give that jar to a brāhmaṇa who has mastered the Vedas. O lord of kings, he should cause to give (i.e. he should give) the great gifts (Mahādānas) along with the jar (to a brāhmaṇa). O Rāma, observe along with the chiefs of troops carefully the vow in this manner. You will be victorious."

36-39. Having heard like this, that Rāma did as he was told. When the son (i.e. descendant) of Raghu (i.e. Rāma) observed that vow, he became victorious. He got (back) Sītā. He conquered Laṅkā, killed Rāvaṇa in the battle. O son, those men who observe the vow in this manner, get success in this world, and get the inexhaustible other world (i.e. they live permanently in heaven). For this reason, O son, the vow of Vijayā should be observed. The greatness of Vijayā destroys all sins. A man by reciting (about) or listening (to this vow) would obtain the fruit of the performance of the Vājapeya sacrifice.

CHAPTER FORTYFIVE

Āmalakī Ekādaśī

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:*

1. O Kṛṣṇa, I have heard about the importance and the great fruit of Vijayā. Now tell me about (the importance of) that (Āmalakī Ekādaśī) which falls in the bright half of the month of Phālguna.

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*It should be Yudhiṣṭhira.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-4. O son of Dharma (i.e. Yudhiṣṭhira), O illustrious one, listen. I shall tell you about that (Ekādaśī) which the glorious Vasiṣṭha explained to Māndhātṛ, when he (i.e. Vasiṣṭha) was asked by Māndhātṛ. This is, O king, especially said to be the speciality of Phālguna. The Āmalakī-vow is auspicious and gives (i.e. takes one) to Viṣṇu's world. A man should go to the root of Āmalakī (tree), and should keep awake there (during the night). Having kept awake there for that night, he would obtain the fruit of (giving) a thousand cows.

Māndhātṛ said:

5-6. O best brāhmaṇa, when did this Āmalakī spring up? Tell all this to me. I have great curiosity (to hear about it). Why is it (said to be) pure? Why is it (said to be) the destroyer of sins? Due to what would a man obtain the fruit of (giving) a thousand cows by keeping awake on it?

Vasiṣṭha said:

7-17a. O glorious one, I shall tell (you) how it came about on the earth. The great tree of Āmalakī destroys all (kinds of) sins. When formerly (all this) was just an ocean only (i.e. when the earth was inundated in water), when the immovable and the movable had perished, when hosts of gods and demons had disappeared, and serpents and fiends had perished, then the lord of the gods, the highest soul, the ancient one went to Brahman, his highest and immutable position. Then from the spittle of Brahmā, keeping awake, a drop lustrous like the moon was produced, and it fell down on the eatrh. From that drop was produced the great Āmalakī tree, having many branches and twigs bent due to the burden of fruits. It was declared as the first shoot among all the trees. Then, after it Brahmā created all these beings—the revered God created gods, demons, gandharvas, yakṣas, fiends, serpents and so also the spotless great sages. Those gods came there, where Dhātrī (the Āmalaka tree) dear to Viṣṇu, stood, and O glorious one, seeing it they were very much amazed. They stood there thinking, 'We do not know this tree.' When they were thinking like this, a heavenly voice said to them:

"This excellent tree is Āmalakī, said to belong to Viṣṇu. Merely by remembering it a man would get the fruit of (giving) a cow. By touching it one's religious merit is doubled, and by wearing it it is tripled.

17b-21. Therefore, making all efforts, a man should always resort to Āmalakī. It is said to remove all sins, to belong to Viṣṇu and to destroy sins. At its root lives Viṣṇu; and the grandsire (i.e. Brahmā) stays above it; and in its trunk the highest lord, the revered Rudra lives. All the sages (live) in its branches, and the deities (live) in its twigs. The gods remain in its leaves, and the Maruts in its flowers. All the lords of the created beings are similarly settled in its fruits. I have declared this Dhātrī to be full of all gods. Therefore, it is most adorable for those who are greatly devoted to Viṣṇu."

The sages said:

22. We do not know who you are. Due to what have you become the cause? Tell us the truth—whether you are a god or someone else.

23-27a. Seeing the amazed wise men (*the voice said*:) "I am that ancient Viṣṇu, who is the creator of all beings and all worlds." Having heard those words of the god of gods, Brahmā's sons then began praising the god who was beginningless and endless. "Obeisance to the Being, the self-born one, the soul, the supreme soul. Repeated and constant salutations to the unfalling one, to the endless one (i.e. Viṣṇu). Repeated salutations to Dāmodara, to the omniscient one, to the lord of sacrifices." Thus praised there by the sages, lord Viṣṇu was pleased. He said to the sages: "What desired (objects) should I give you?"

The sages said:

27b-29. O venerable one, if you are pleased, then with a desire for our good, tell us (about) some vow which gives the fruit of heaven and salvation, which gives wealth, grains, religious merit, and pleasing oneself, which requires little exertion, which gives many fruits and which is the best vow among vows, having observed which one is honoured in Viṣṇu's world.

Viṣṇu said:

30-32. When in the bright half of Phālguna, the Dvādaśī comes with Puṣya (i.e. the eighth lunar mansion appearing in the sky), it would be very auspicious and would destroy great sins. O best brāhmaṇas, listen to the special (vow) to be observed on that day. Having gone to Āmalakī, one should keep awake there. One would be free from all sins and would obtain the fruit of giving a thousand cows. O brāhmaṇas, I have told you about this vow, the best of all vows. Having worshipped Viṣṇu (residing) in it, one is not dropped from Viṣṇu's world.

The sages said:

33-40. Tell us about the manner of (the observance of) this vow. How would it be perfect? What are the hymns, what are the salutations, and what are the deities that are declared? How is a gift (given)? How is a bath (taken)? What is said to be the manner of worship? So also tell us accurately the hymn for offering respectful offering and worship.

Viṣṇu said:

O best brāhmaṇas, listen to the manner (of the observance) of this vow. Having remained without food on the Ekādaśī day and the next day, he should, after cleaning his teeth, utter the words, "O lotus-eyed one, O you unfallen one, I shall (now) eat. Be my refuge." He should not talk with the fallen, the thieves, so also the heretics, so also with men of bad conduct, with those who have violated the limits (of good conduct), and who have outraged their preceptors' wives. Then the wise man, restrained and composed, should duly bathe in the afternoon, in a river, or a tank or a lake or at home. First, he should apply clay (to his body) and then should bathe. "O you earth, who are trodden by horses, chariots and by Viṣṇu, O you earth, remove my sin, and the wicked deed that I have done."

41-48. This is the hymn (to be recited at the time) of (applying) the clay (to the body). "O water, you are the life of all beings and protector of their bodies. Salutation to the lord of the species that are generated by sweat and that sprout as plants. Let this bath of me be (as it were) I have bathed at all holy

places, deep lakes, streams, in rivers and reservoirs." This is the hymn to be recited at the time of bathing. Having got fashioned the golden (image of) the sage Jāmadagnya (i.e. Paraśurāma) of the weight of a māṣaka of gold, or half of it, he should come home and perform the sacrifice for the worship. Then with all the requisites he should go to the Āmalakī (tree). Then having (thus) gone to the Āmalakī (tree), and having cleaned (the region) all round (it), he should place there a jar having no scratch, to the accompaniment of hymns, having five gems (attached to it), made fragrant with divine perfumes, with an umbrella and a pair of sandals, and smeared with white sandal, with a wreath and a garland attached to its neck, incensed with all (kinds) of incenses; he should make it charming by kindling a series of lamps all around; upon it he should place a pot full of divine parched grains. On the pot he should place (the image of) the very lustrous Jāmadagnya.

49-52. (Worshipping) the feet (of the image, (he should say "Salutation to Viśoka;" (worshipping) its knees (he should say) "(Salutation to) Viśvarūpin." (Worshipping) its thighs (he should say) "(Salutation to) Ugra." (Worshipping) its waist (he should say) "(Salutation to) Dāmodara." (Worshipping) its belly (he should say) "(Salutation to) Padmanābha." (Worshipping its chest he should say) "(Salutation to) Śrīvatsadhārin." (Worshipping) its left arm, (he should say) "Salutation to Cakrin." (Worshipping) its right arm (he should say) "Salutation to Gadin." (Worshipping) its neck (he should say) "Salutation to Vaikuṇṭha." (Worshipping) its mouth (he should say) "Salutation to Yajñamukha". (Worshipping) its nose (he should say) "Salutation to Viśokanidhi." (Worshipping) its eyes (he should say) "Salutation to Vāsudeva." (Worshipping) its forehead (he should say) "Salutation to Vāmana." (Worshipping) its eyebrows (he should say) "Salutation to Rāma." He should worship its head saying "Salutation to the Sarvātman."

53-54. This is the hymn to be recited at the time of worshipping (the deity). Then to the superior god of gods he should, with a devoted mind, offer a respectful offering with a white fruit. Then, with a devoted mind he should keep awake by means of dances, songs, musical instruments, religious tales and eulogies.

55-63. He should similarly pass the entire night by means of (listening to, reciting) accounts about Viṣṇu. Then by (repeating) Viṣṇu's names, he should go round the Dhātrī (tree). (The repetition of the names should be done for) one hundred and eight or twentyeight times. Then, in the morning, having waved a light (in front of the image) of Viṣṇu, and having honoured a brāhmaṇa, he should offer all that to him (saying) "In the Jāmadagnya ghaṭa there are a couple of garments and two sandals. May Keśava, in the form of Jāmadagnya, be pleased with me." Then he should touch and go round the Āmalakī (tree). Having then bathed duly, he should feed brāhmaṇas. Then surrounded by (i.e. along with the members of) his fraternity he should eat. I shall tell you about the entire religious merit (obtained) by doing like this. There is no doubt that he gets the fruit which is had at all the holy places, by means of all (kinds of) gifts, and which is greater than (that of) all sacrifices. I have thus narrated to you in full the vow that is the best of (all) vows.

Saying so, the lord of gods vanished there only. All the sages also did all that completely. In the same way, O lord of kings, (please) observe this vow which is hard to practise and which frees (one from) all sins.

CHAPTER FORTYSIX

Pāpamocanī Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. I have heard about the Āmalakī (vow) in the bright half of Phālguna. What would be (i.e. what is) the name of the Ekādaśī in the dark half of Caitra?

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2. O lord of kings, listen to the sin-destroying account, which Lomaśa, when he was asked by emperor Māndhātṛ, told (to him).

Māndhātṛ said:

3. O venerable one, with a desire for the well-being of the people, I desire to hear what the name of the Ekādaśī in the first half of Caitra would be. What is the manner of it (i.e. in which way is it observed)? What is its fruit? (Please) favour (me) and tell it (to me).

Lomaśa said:

4-8. The Ekādaśī in the dark half of Caitra is called Pāpamocanī. It is said to destroy the state of a goblin. Listen, O king, I shall tell its account which gives the desired objects, divine power, auspicious and righteous things, and destroys sins. Formerly in the forest called Caitraratha, full of bees, and resorted to by celestial nymphs, when the spring season had arrived, gandharva maidens rejoiced along with kinnaras by (playing upon) musical instruments. The residents of heaven (i.e. gods) led by Indra also sported there. There was nothing else as delightful as the Caitraratha forest. In that forest many sages practised profuse penance.

9-18a. A celestial nymph known as Mañjughoṣā started to infatuate an excellent sage named Medhāvin, best among sages, who was a celibate and lived there. Showing her devotion to him, she through fear of him remained just a krośa away in the vicinity of the hermitage, singing sweetly and pressing (i.e. playing upon) the lute agreeably. The mind-born Cupid, seeing her with flowers (worn by her) and sandal (applied to her body) and desiring to vanquish the best sages, the devotees of Śiva, lived in her body. (Mañjughoṣā) having, in due order, made her eyebrows the curved end of the bow, her glances the string of the bow, her eyes along with her eyelashes the arrows, her breasts the tent, started for victory. Mañjughoṣā became the army of that Cupid only. Seeing that sage Medhāvin she too was oppressed by the passion of love. That Medhāvin also, with his body shooting up with youth, shone (there). Wearing a white sacred thread and appearing like another Cupid, that Medhāvin lived in the auspicious hermitage of Cyavana.

18b-24. Having seen the best sage staying there, that Mañjughoṣā was overpowered by Cupid (i.e. passion of love)

and she sang gently. That best sage, having seen her singing like that, with her bracelets jingling and her anklets and girdle tinkling, was forcibly deluded by Cupid with his army. That beautiful woman Mañjughoṣā, seeing that sage like that, approached him and deluded him with feminine coquettish gestures; and keeping her lute down (on the ground) she embraced that lord of sages, as a creeper would encircle a tree shaking due to the velocity of the wind. That best sage, Medhāvin, too rejoiced with her. Seeing in that (forest) only her excellent body, his auspicious nature left him, and he was influenced by the nature of Cupid. The lover did not know (i.e. care for) night or day, while rejoicing with her. Due to (i.e. in) the violation of (good) conduct, the sage passed a period of many years. Mañjughoṣā set out to go to the divine world. While going she said to the best sage, rejoicing (with her): "O brāhmaṇa, give me the order to go to my own region."

Medhāvin said:

25-30. O you beautiful one, today only just at the beginning of the nightfall you have come. Stay with me till (it is the time for my) morning prayer.

Hearing these words of the sage, she was frightened. She, afraid of the sage's curse, again delighted that sage for many years, O best king. She rejoiced with the sage for fiftyfive years nine months and three days. (But that period) was just half a night for him. When that much time passed, she again said to the sage: "O Brāhmaṇa, give me the order to go (back). I have to go home."

Medhāvin said:

It is (just) the morning. Listen to my words. Be steady till I offer my evening prayer.

Hearing these words of the sage, she was full of joy. Smiling slightly, she of a bright smile again spoke:

The celestial nymph said:

31-38. O sinless best brāhmaṇa, how long your prayer has

extended! (Please) favour me, and take into consideration the time that has passed.

Hearing these words of her, the best brāhmaṇa, with his eyes dilated due to wonder, calculated the time that had passed. Fiftyseven years were passed (by him) with her. Then he got angry with her, and was (like fire) with rows of flames. He, seeing her of the nature of destruction, putting an end to his penance, became very angry, and discharging sparks of fire from his eyes, and noticing that his penance earned with great effort had been wasted with her (i.e. in her company), the sage Medhāvin with his lips throbbing and his senses agitated cursed her: "Be a female goblin. Fie upon you, a sinful woman of bad conduct, an unchaste woman, who loves sins (i.e. sinful conduct)." Parched by his curse, she remained bent with modesty. The beautiful woman, desiring the sage's favour said these words to him: "O best brāhmaṇa, (please) favour me. Appease your curse; for the friendship of the good takes place (even) by (walking together for) seven steps (or by exchanging seven words). O brāhmaṇa with you I have passed many years. For this reason, O lord, O you of a good vow, favour (me)."

The sage said:

39-42. O good woman, hear my words appeasing the curse. O sinful one, what have I to do with you? You destroyed (my) great penance. In the dark half of Caitra would fall (i.e. falls) the auspicious Ekādaśī called Pāpamocanikā, which destroys all sins. Having observed the pure vow of it (i.e. on that day, your) state of a female goblin will go away.

Having spoken like this Medhāvin went to his father's hermitage. Seeing him to have come (back), Cyavana said to him: "What is this that you have done? You have destroyed your religious merit, O son."

Medhāvin said:

43. O father, I committed a sin. I rejoiced with a celestial nymph. O father, tell me an expiation by means of which my sin would perish.

Cyavana said:

44-46. In the dark half of Caitra falls the (Ekādaśī) called Pāpamocanī. O son, when the vow of it is observed, the heap of sins would perish.

Hearing these words of his father, he observed that excellent vow. His sin perished and he became endowed with (the merit of) his penance. That Mañjughoṣā too, having observed that excellent vow, was freed from the state of a female goblin due to (having observed) that vow of Pāpamocanikā. That excellent celestial nymph taking a divine form went to heaven.

Lomaśa said:

47-49. O king, all the sin (however) little of those best men who observe the vow of the Pāpamocanikā, would perish. A man, by reciting (about) it, by listening (to its account) would obtain the fruit (of the gift) of a thousand cows. All those who have killed a brāhmaṇa or have snatched gold or are drunkards or have gone to the teacher's bed (i.e. have violated the wife of the preceptor) become free from sins by means of the observance of this vow. By its observance the excellent vow gives great religious merit.

CHAPTER FORTYSEVEN

Kāmadā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. Salutation to you, O Vāsudeva; tell me, Ekādaśī of which name would fall in the bright half of Caitra.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2. O king, listen attentively to an auspicious old tale which formerly Vasiṣṭha narrated to Dilīpa who had asked (him).

Dilīpa said:

3. O revered one, I desire to hear. Favour me and tell me what the name of the Ekādaśī that would fall in the bright half of Caitra, is.

Vasiṣṭha said:

4-12. O king, you have asked well. I shall tell (about it) to you. The Ekādaśī falling in the bright half of Caitra is Kāmadā by name. (This) Ekādaśī is most auspicious, and is a fire to the fuel of sins. O king, listen to this story which destroys sins, (and) which gives religious merit. Formerly in the beautiful city of Nāgapura, adorned with gold and jewels, lived very powerful nāgas led by Puṇḍarīka. In that city king Puṇḍarīka ruled. He was served by gandharvas, kinnaras, and celestial nymphs also. The excellent celestial nymph was Lalitā; and the (excellent) gandharva was Lalita; the couple, glowing with attachment, and oppressed by passion of love, rejoiced in their beautiful house which was full of wealth and grains. In the heart of Lalitā (her) husband always resided; (and) in his heart, that beautiful Lalitā always resided. Once Puṇḍarīka, remaining in his assembly, was sporting. Lalita, without his wife, was singing and dancing (there). Remembering Lalitā, his tongue stumbled over (i.e. while uttering) an arrangement of words. Knowing the state of his mind, the best nāga Karkoṭaka reported his error in (uttering) the arrangement of words to Puṇḍarīka.

13-20. Hearing the words of Karkoṭaka, Puṇḍarīka, the king of the nāgas, with his eyes red due to anger, became extremely fierce. He then cursed Lalita who was singing and was overpowered by the passion of love: "O you of a wicked mind, be a demon that eats raw flesh, and that eats human beings, since, being influenced by (the love for) your wife, you are singing before me." As a result of his words, he (i.e. Lalita) got a demon's form, O best king. His face was fierce. His eyes were deformed. He caused fear even when just seen. His arms were as long as a yojana. His mouth resembled a cave. His eyes were like the moon and the sun. His neck was like a mountain. His nostrils were (just) hollows. His lips were a yojana in length. O lord of kings, his body rose (up to) eight yojanas. He, as

result of his deed(s) became a demon of this type. And that Lalitā, seeing her husband thus deformed was oppressed by great grief, and thought to herself: "What do (i.e. should) I do? Where do (i.e. should) I go? My husband is troubled by the curse." Recalling like this to her mind, she did not obtain pleasure in her mind.

21-25. Lalitā, along with her husband, moved into a dense forest. That demon who took any form he liked, was cruel, was engaged in (committing) sins, who was deformed, ate human beings, wandered in that impassable forest. He, oppressed by sins, did not have pleasure at night or by day. Seeing her husband like that Lalitā was very much pained. She, weeping, wandered with him in (that) dense forest. Having seen a lovely hermitage and a sage of a tranquil form, she quickly went to him, and saluting him, stood before him. Seeing her distressed, the sage, solely devoted to kindness, said to her: "Who are you? Why have you come here? Tell the truth to me."

Lalitā said:

26-28. There is a gandharva Vīradhanvan (by name). I am the daughter of that noble one. Know me to be Lalitā by name. I have come here for the sake of my husband. O great sage, due to a sin, my husband has become a demon of a fierce form and wicked deeds. Seeing him, I am not happy. Now, O brāhmaṇa, instruct me. O lord, tell me what I should do. (Tell me about) the religious merit due to which he is free from his state of demon, O best brāhmaṇa.

The sage said:

29-31. O you beautiful woman, it is now the bright half of the month of Caitra. O Lalitā, (in it falls) the Kāmadā Ekādaśī which is great and which destroys sins. O auspicious one, duly observe its vow as told by me. Give the religious merit which (you will obtain) from this vow to your husband. When the religious merit is given (to him), his sin will go away in a moment.

Hearing these words of the sage, Lalitā was delighted.

32-39. Having fasted on the Ekādaśī, so also on the day of Dvādaśī, Lalitā, in the vicinity of a brāhmaṇa, and in front of Viṣṇu, uttered these words for the emancipation of her husband: "I have observed the vow, viz. the Kāmadā fast. Let his goblinhood go (away) by the prowess of that religious merit." Merely at the words of Lalitā, just at that moment, his sins went away, and he had a divine form. His state of a demon went (away) and he got gandharvahood again. Full of gold and jewels, he rejoiced with Lalitā. The couple having more lovely forms than before got into an excellent aeroplane, and looked more charming due to the efficacy of Kāmadā. O best king, realising this, this (Kāmadā-vow) should be carefully observed. For the good of the people I told it to you. It destroys sins like that of the condition of a goblin. There is nothing superior to it in the three worlds with the mobile and the immobile. O king, by reciting about it, and listening to the (the account of) it one would get the fruit of a Vājapeya sacrifice.

CHAPTER FORTYEIGHT

Varūthinī Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. What would be the name of the Ekādaśī in the dark half of Vaiśākha? Tell me (its) importance. Salutation to you, O Vāsudeva.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-15. O king, this Ekādaśī named Varūthinī, (falling) in the dark half of Vaiśākha, gives grandeur in this and the next world. Due to the Varūthinī-vow happiness always results; and the sins are destroyed, and good fortune is obtained. An unfortunate woman who observes this (vow) obtains good fortune. This gives pleasures and salvation to all the people. It removes all the sins of people, and cuts off living as an embryo (i.e. puts an end to rebirth). Due to the Varūthinī-vow only

Māndhātṛ went to heaven. So also many other kings like Dhundhumāra (went to heaven). Lord Śiva became free from the sin of (breaking) the skull of Brahmā. One who observes the vow of Varūthinī gets the fruit equal to that (obtained by him) who gives a bhāra of gold on Kurukṣetra when the Sun (is auspicious). That man with faith who observes the vow of Varūthinī, gets (his) desired (objects) in this world and the next (world). O best king, to those who observe it, it is pure, purifying; it destroys great sins. It gives them pleasures and salvation. O king, giving of elephants is superior to giving of horses. Giving of land (is superior) to giving of elephants. Gift of sesamum-seeds is superior (even) to that. Giving of gold is superior to that, and giving of food is superior to that (i.e. giving of gold). There was not nor there will be a greater gift than that of food. By means of food the manes, gods and men are satisfied. O best king, giving one's daughter (in marriage) is said by the wise to be like that. The lord himself said that giving of a cow is equal to that. Of all the gifts that have been mentioned, giving knowledge is the best. A man, by observing the Varūthinī(-vow) gets a fruit equal to that. Those men who, deluded by sin, subsist on the money (got) for (giving their) daughter (in marriage), lose their religious merit, and go to hell full of torments. Therefore, with all care money for giving a daughter in marriage should not be taken (i.e. should be avoided).

16-25. O lord of kings, he who through greed takes money for offering his daughter in marriage, certainly becomes (i.e. is born as) a cat in the next existence. O king, even Citragupta cannot measure the religious merit of him who, with his religious merit, gives, according to his capacity, his daughter well-adorned (in marriage). A man gets fruit equal to that by observing the Varūthinī(-vow). Bell-metal, flesh, masūra (a kind of pulse), thick peas, kodrava (a species of grain eaten by the poor), vegetables, honey, eatables of (i.e. offered by) others, and food and sexual union—these ten a devotee of Viṣṇu should avoid on the tenth day. Playing with dice, sport, sleep, tāmbūla, cleaning the teeth, censuring others, wickedness, theft, harming (others) and indulging in sex, anger, telling lies—(these) he should avoid on the Ekādaśī. Bell-metal, flesh, liquor, honey, oil, talking to those who are fallen, exercise, journey and food

and sexual union, (mounting on) a bull's back, food prepared with masūra—he should avoid on Dvādaśī. O king, to those who have observed the Varūthinī(-vow) in this manner, it would, after destroying all their sins, give them an undecaying position in the end. Those who, having kept awake at night, have worshipped Viṣṇu, are freed from all sins and reach the highest position. Therefore, those who are afraid of sins, should observe it with all efforts. A man afraid of (Saturn) the son of enemy of the night, should observe the Varūthinī(-vow). O king, by reciting (about) it and by listening to (the account of) it, a man would obtain the fruit of (the gift of) a thousand cows. Being free from all sins, he is honoured in Viṣṇu's world.

CHAPTER FORTYNINE

Mohinī Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. Of which name would be the Ekādaśī in the bright half of Vaiśākha? What is its fruit? What is the manner of (observing) it? Tell it, O Viṣṇu.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2. O lord of kings, the same as you are asking me (now) was formerly asked by the intelligent Rāma from Vasiṣṭha.

Rāma said:

3-4. O glorious one, I desire to hear about the best among the vows, which destroys all sins, and which cuts off all miseries. I have experienced sorrows (like the ones) due to separation from Sītā. So I am scared. (Therefore), O great sage, I am asking you.

Vasiṣṭha said:

5-10. O Rāma, you have asked well. This is (due to) your devoted mind. Merely by uttering your name a man is purified.

Yet, with a desire for the well-being of the people, I shall tell you (about) the excellent vow, (most) pure of the purifying vows. O Rāma, the Ekādaśī (that) would fall in the bright half of Vaiśākha, is called Mohinī. It is great and removes all sins. Due to the prowess of the vow of this (Ekādaśī men) are freed from the noose of delusion and the multitude of sins. I am telling you the truth and the truth (only). Therefore, O Rāma, this one, that destroys sins and puts an end to great misery should be observed by (people) like you. O Rāma, listen attentively to the great, sin-removing story, merely by hearing which (even) a great sin perishes.

11-20. On the lovely bank of Sarasvatī there was an auspicious city Bhadrāvatī. A king named Dyutimat ruled there. He was born in the Lunar family. He was courageous and was true to his word. A vaiśya prosperous with wealth and grains lived there. He was known as Dhanapāla. He prompted auspicious deeds. He constructed public water places, wells, temples, gardens, tanks and houses. He was engrossed in devotion for Viṣṇu and was calm. He had five sons: Sumanas, Dyutimat, Medhāvin and Sukṛta. The fifth Dhṛṣṭabuddhi was alway engaged in (committing) great sins. He was attached to the union with others' wives, and was well-versed in stories about voluptuous people. He was attached to addictions like gambling, and ardently longed for (the company of) others' wives. He did not intend to worship deities, nor the dead ancestors, nor brāhmaṇas. The wicked one lived (by doing) injustice, and wasted the money of his father. He ate what was prohibited and was always attached to drinking liquor. The wicked one threw his arms round the neck of a prostitute and wandered over the crossway. He was expelled from the house by his father and was also forsaken by his kinsmen. He even exhausted the money, ornaments on his body. He was abandoned by the harlots and was condemned (by them) due to the loss of his wealth. Then he was disturbed in mind, was without clothes, and was oppressed by hunger. "What should I do? Where should I go? By what means shall I subsist?" (Thus he thought.)

21-29. Just in his father's city he started stealing. He was arrested by the royal officers, but was released due to the importance of his father. Being zealous, they bound him, again

released him and again bound him. The wicked Dhṛṣṭabuddhi was bound with strong fetters. He was repeatedly whipped and tormented. "O dull-witted one, you should not live within the range (i.e. limits) of my kingdom." Saying so, he was freed by the king from the strong fetters. Due to his fear he went out (of the city) to a dense forest. Being oppressed by hunger and thirst he ran here and there. Like a lion he killed deer, pigs and spotted (deer). Addicted to eating flesh, he always lived in the forest. Taking a bow in his hand, and putting the quiver on his back, he, going on foot, killed the birds moving in the forest. That blinded, cruel Dhṛṣṭabuddhi killed these—partridges, peacocks, francolins, and rats—and other (birds). He plunged into the mud of sins due to sins committed in his former existence. He was overcome with pain and sorrow. He was annoyed day and night. Due to his acquisition of some religious merit he reached the hermitage of Kauṇḍinya.

30-32. Dhṛṣṭabuddhi, oppressed with the burden of grief, approached the ascetic who had bathed in Gaṅgā in the month of Vaiśākha. Due to a slight contact of his garment his sins vanished and his misfortune was destroyed. Standing in front of Kauṇḍinya, he, with the palms of his hands joined, said to him:

Dhṛṣṭabuddhi said:

O brāhmaṇa, O greatest of the brāhmaṇas, taking compassion on me, tell me that religious merit due to the powers of which salvation takes place.

Kauṇḍinya said:

33-39. Listen attentively to that by which your sins will perish. In the dark half of Vaiśākha falls the well-known (Ekādaśī) named Mohinī. Prompted by my words, observe the vow of that Ekādaśī. When men observe a fast on this Mohinī (Ekādaśī), their sins comparable to Meru and earned (i.e. committed) in many existences perish.

Hearing these words of the sage, Dhṛṣṭabuddhi, pleased in his mind, observed duly the vow according to the advice of Kauṇḍinya. O best among kings, when he observed (this) vow, his sins vanished. Then, he, having a divine body and mounted

upon Garuḍa, went to Viṣṇu's world which is free from all calamities. O Rāmacandra, the Mohinī-vow is excellent in this way. In three worlds with the mobile and the immobile, there is nothing greater than it. Sacrifices and the like, so also (visits to) holy places, gifts are not equal even to the sixteenth part of (the religious merit) it (gives). By reciting (about) it and listening to (its account) a man would obtain the fruit of (the gift of) a thousand cows.

CHAPTER FIFTY

Aparā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. What would be (i.e. is) the name of the Ekādaśī falling in the dark half of Jyeṣṭha? I desire to hear (about its) importance. O Janārdana, (please) tell it.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-10. O king, you have, with the desire of the well-being of the people, asked well. (That Ekādaśī) is Aparā by name, O lord of kings. It gives unending fruit. He who observes the (vow of) Aparā becomes famous in the world. O king, he who is overcome by (the sin of) killing a brāhmaṇa, who kills (the members of) his family, who has procured an abortion, who censures others, who is interested in others' wives, certainly becomes free from sin on observing the (vow of) Aparā. These, viz. one who gives false testimony, who uses false measures or false weights, who would study false (i.e. unauthoritative) Vedas, so also false sacred texts, so also one who is a fraudulent astrologer, who is a fraudulent physician, and one who is connected with false testimony are the residents of hell. O king, by observing the (vow) of Aparā, they are free from sins. A kṣatriya who giving up the duty of a kṣatriya, flees from the battle, goes, being expelled from his caste, to a fierce hell. He too, by observing the (vow of) Aparā, would, after shedding his sin, go to heaven. A

learned disciple who censures his preceptor, having incurred great sins, goes to a fearful hell. That man also by observing the (vow of) Aparā would obtain good position (i.e. beatitude).

11-20. O king, listen to the greatness of Aparā. I am (now) telling it. A fruit similar to that which men obtain (by bathing) at Prayāga in Māgha, when the Sun is in Makara (i.e. the sign Capricornus of Zodiac), or that religious merit which is obtained (by a man) after bathing at Kāśī on an eclipse-day, or the fruit which a man who offers piṇḍas to his dead ancestors at Gayā, gets, or which a man who bathes in the Gautamī (river) when Jupiter is in Siṁha (i.e. the sign Leo of the Zodiac) gets, or the fruit which a man gets on bathing in Kṛṣṇaveṇī when Jupiter is in Kanyā (i.e. the sign Virgo of the Zodiac), or the fruit a man gets on seeing Kumbhakedāra, or in the pilgrimage to Badaryāśrama and visiting holy places during it, or the fruit which a man obtains (by bathing) at Kurukṣetra when the planet Sun (is auspicious), or the fruit that a man gets by performing a sacrifice with (the giving of) presents and gifts of elephants, horses or gold, is obtained by observing the (vow of) Aparā. So also a man obtains that fruit by the Aparā-vow which he gets by giving (to a brāhmaṇa) a recently calved cow, gold, or (a piece of) land. This (vow) is an axe (cutting) the tree in the form of sins, and is a wild fire to the fuel in the form of sins. It is the Sun (dispelling) the darkness of sins. It is a lion (killing) the spotted deer of sins. Those who are without (i.e. who do not observe) the vow of (this) Ekādaśī, are born to die like bubbles in water or like ants among creatures. A man, having fasted on the Aparā (Ekādaśī day) and having worshipped Viṣṇu, is free from all sins and is honoured in Viṣṇu's world. I have told (this vow) to you with the desire of the well-being of the people. O king, a man reciting (about) it and listening (to its account), would obtain the fruit of (gift of) a thousand cows.

CHAPTER FIFTYONE

Nirjalā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. O Janārdana, I have heard the full importance of Aparā. O you who show respect (to others), tell me about that (Ekādaśī) which would fall (i.e. falls) in the bright half of Jyeṣṭha.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2. Satyavatī's pious son, Vyāsa, who knows the essence of all sacred texts and who has mastered the Vedas and the Upaniṣads will tell (you about) it.

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

3. I have heard the duties as told by Manu, so also as told by Vasiṣṭha. O Dvaipāyana, you please tell properly the duties of Viṣṇu's devotees.

Śrī Vedavyāsa said:

4-9. O lord of men, you have listened to the duties as told by Manu, so also as told by Vasiṣṭha. They cannot be practised in Kaliyuga. O you very intelligent one, (the Ekādaśī vow) is the essence of (i.e. of what is told in) the Purāṇas, is an easy means, requires little money, little effort, (but) gives great fruit. One should not eat on the Ekādaśī-days of both the fortnights (of a month). On the Dvādaśī day, being pure, having worshipped Viṣṇu, having honoured (a brāhmaṇa), one should then eat with a brāhmaṇa. O king, one should not eat during the impurity caused by a birth or a death in the family. O best of men, those who desire to go to heaven should practise this vow as long as they live. There is no doubt about this. Even those who are sinners, who are of a wicked conduct, who are most sinful, who are bereft of piety, go to my proximity (i.e. reach me) if they do not eat on Ekādaśī.

10. Having heard these words of him, the mighty-armed Bhīma trembled like an aśvattha-leaf, and saluting his preceptor, said to him:

Bhīmasena said:

11-14. O grandsire, O you very intelligent one, listen to my important words. Yudhiṣṭhira and Kuntī, so also Draupadī and Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva, who practise (this) good vow, never eat on the day of Ekādaśī. They always tell me, "O Bhīma, do not eat (on the Ekādaśī day)." I told them: "For me hunger is difficult to bear. I shall duly give gifts. I shall worship Viṣṇu."

Hearing the words of Bhīmasena, Vyāsa said (these) words:

Vyāsa said:

15. If you desire (to go to) heaven, and if (you think) hell is painful, then you should not eat on the Ekādaśī of both the fortnights.

Bhīmasena said:

16-18. O grandsire, O you very intelligent one, I shall tell in front of (i.e. to) you. I am not able (to go on) by eating (even) once a day. Then O lord, how can I (put up with) a fast? That fire, called Vṛka, which is always present in my belly, is extinguished only when I eat many times. O great sage, I am not able to observe a (single) fast. I shall properly observe that due to which heaven is reached. Therefore, having decided about one, tell me that by (observing) which I shall obtain heaven.

Vyāsa said:

19-26. When the Ekādaśī would fall on (the day when the Sun) is in the second or the third sign of the Zodiac in the month of Jyeṣṭha, a wise man should carefully observe (the Ekādaśī fast) without (even drinking) water. He should avoid even sipping a mouthful of water and should not eat (at all). Otherwise the vow would be broken. Listen, when a man (lives even) by avoiding water from the sunrise of a day to the sunrise (of the next day), he obtains the fruit of twelve Dvādaśīs. Then in the auspicious morning of the Dvādaśī day he should bathe, and having duly given water, gold etc. to brāhmaṇas, he, being contended and controlled, should eat along with brāhmaṇas. O

Bhīmasena, listen to the religious merit (which is obtained) by doing like this. There is no doubt that he hereby obtains the fruit of the Ekādaśīs that fall during the year. Keśava, the holder of a conch, a disc and a mace told me like this: "Leaving all others a man should seek my refuge only." A man, not eating on an Ekādaśī day is freed from sins. In the Kali-age, there is no purity of objects. Rites (or ceremonies) are based on the Smṛtis.

27-33a. How can there be a rite based on the Vedas, when the wicked Kali-age has arrived? O son of Vāyu (i.e. Bhīma), what is the use of telling you much again and again? A man should not eat on the Ekādaśī of both the fortnights. Listen, O Bhīma, to the auspicious fruit that (a man) obtains by remaining without water on the Ekādaśī day of the bright half of the month of Jyeṣṭha. O Bhīma, if fasts are observed on all the auspicious Ekādaśī days that are said to fall during the year and in the bright or dark fortnights (of each month), they give wealth and grains, give sons, good health and auspicious (things). O king, there is no doubt about it. I am telling you the truth. The big-bodied, fierce, dark-formed, fearful messengers of Yama, who hold staffs and nooses, do not approach that man. (But) Viṣṇu's messengers who have put on yellow garments, who are gentle, who have held discs in their hands, whose speed is like that of the mind, take him on his death to Viṣṇu's city.

33b-41. Therefore, with all efforts a man should observe the Ekādaśī-fast without (drinking even) water. Then having given he is freed from all sins. Therefore, O son of Kuntī, on this day observe a fast and worship Viṣṇu with all efforts for the destruction of your sins. "Even by means of passion as much as the size of the point of an arrow, I have not sinned even in a dream. O lord of gods, I shall eat food on the next day of the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu." Uttering this hymn he should engage himself in (observing) the fast of Ekādaśī after being endowed with faith and restraint for the destruction of all his sins. By the power of Ekādaśī all the sin of the size of the Meru and Mandara mountains, which a man has committed, is reduced to ash. O king, those who are not able to give should give a pitcher containing gold along with garments.

He who, on this day, observes the vow of (not drinking even) water, is meritorious. The fruit of the gift of gold is said to be a crorefold in every watch. All that (like) a bath, a gift, muttering of prayers, a sacrifice that is given (or performed) by a man, becomes unending. This is told by Kṛṣṇa himself. What is the use of any other religious rite than the Ekādaśī observed without (drinking) water?

42-52. Having properly observed it with due rites, a man would obtain Viṣṇu's position. All that like gold, food, garments, which are given by a man on this day, would, O king, be inexhaustible. He who eats food on the Ekādaśī day eats sin. In this world he becomes a cāṇḍāla and after death gets a miserable position. Those who, having fasted, will give gifts on the Dvādaśī day in the bright half of the month of Jyeṣṭha, obtain the highest position. Those like the killer of a brāhmaṇa, a drunkard, a thief, a hater of his preceptor or one who always tells lies, who fast without (even drinking) water, are freed from all sins. O son of Kuntī, listen to the special gift which is to be given on the Ekādaśī day, on which not (even) water (is to be drunk) by men and women endowed with faith. He who lies in water should be worshipped and a watery cow should be given (to a brāhmaṇa). An actual cow should be given or of ghee. O best among the righteous, brāhmaṇas should be carefully pleased by means of big presents and with various kinds of sweet food. The brāhmaṇas are pleased, and when they are pleased, Viṣṇu gives salvation. Those who have not fasted on this day have wronged themselves. They—the sinners, and of a bad conduct—have been undoubtedly plundered. Those who, being calm, controlled, devoted to (giving) gifts, worshipped Viṣṇu, and keeping awake, fasted on this day, have taken along with themselves a hundred (members) past and future (of) their families to the abode of Viṣṇu.

53-58. On this day on (which even) water (should) not (be drunk) food, garments, so also cows, water, a good bed and a good seat, a water-pot used by an ascetic, so also an umbrella should be given (to a brāhmaṇa). He who gives a pair of shoes to the best brāhmaṇa—a worthy recipient—is honoured in heaven (after being taken there) by (i.e. in) a golden aeroplane. He who would listen to (the account of) this with devotion, and

he who would narrate it, both go to heaven. No doubt should be raised about this. That fruit which a man obtains by offering a śrāddha at Kurukṣetra when the Sun is eclipsed by Rāhu, is obtained even by listening to (the account of) this. After cleaning his teeth, he should have the restriction: 'On the day of the Ekādaśī, to please Viṣṇu, I shall, remaining without food, avoid water except for sipping.' Viṣṇu, the lord of gods, should be worshipped on Dvādaśī.

59-64. Having duly worshipped (Viṣṇu) with sandal, incenses, flowers, so also pleasing garments, he should recite this hymn: "O god of gods, O Hṛṣīkeśa, O you who emancipate (beings) from the ocean of the mundane existence, take me to the highest position due to (my offering) the pitcher of water." O Bhīma, on that auspicious Ekādaśī which falls in the bright half of Jyeṣṭha, a man should fast without (even) drinking water, by giving water pitchers with sugar to the best brāhmaṇas. (Due to this) he rejoices with Viṣṇu. Then he should devoutly give pitchers to brāhmaṇas. Having then fed the brāhmaṇas, he should take food with devotion to them. He who thus observes the full Dvādaśī, removing sins, is free from all sins and goes to the good position (of Viṣṇu).

Since then Bhīma observed (a fast on) this Ekādaśī day. In the world the Dvādaśī came to be known as Pāṇḍava-Dvādaśī.

CHAPTER FIFTYTWO

Yoginī Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. What would be (i.e. is the name of) the Ekādaśī in the dark half of Āṣāḍha? Please favour and tell it to me.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-10. O king, I shall tell you the best of the vows, which destroys all sins and gives full salvation. In the dark half of

Āṣāḍha (falls) the Ekādaśī called Yoginī. O best king, it destroys great sins. (This) Yoginī is an ancient boat for those plunged into the ocean of the worldly existence and for (the good of) those observing the vow of Yoginī which has become the essence in the three worlds. I shall tell an old, auspicious tale. In Alakā (lived) Kubera solely devoted to Śiva. He had a flower-collector called Hemamālin. His beautiful wife was Viśālākṣī by name. With his mind attached to her and being under the sway of Cupid's noose, he, after having brought a heap of flowers from the Mānasa (lake) stayed at home. Being attached to his wife through love, he did not go to Kubera's house. In the temple of god Kubera was worshipping Śiva. O king, at mid-day he was waiting for the flowers. Hemamālin enjoyed with his wife in his house. The king of yakṣas, angry due to the delay, then said: "O yakṣas, why is the wicked-minded Hemamālin not coming (yet)? Ascertain about (i.e. the whereabouts of) him." Thus he spoke repeatedly.

The yakṣas said:

11-14a. O king, lustful for his wife, he rejoices in his house as he pleases.

Hearing their words Kubera was filled with anger. He quickly called that attendant, Hemamālin. He too having realized the delay, with his eyes full of fear, came there even without bathing, and stood in front of him. Seeing him Kubera was angry, and his eyes were reddish due to anger. Full of anger and with his lips trembling through anger, he said:

Kubera said:

14b-22. O sinner, O you of a wicked conduct, you have condemned the god (Śiva). O meanest among the attendants, you, separated from your wife, and suffering from eighteen kinds of leprosy, disappear from this place, and go away.

When these words were uttered by him, he fell from that place and overcome with great grief, his body suffered from leprosy. By day he did not get happiness, nor did he have sleep at night. In the shadow his body was extremely tormented, and

he was oppressed in the summer. Due to the efficacy of Śiva's worship his memory was not lost. Though overpowered by sin, he remembered his old deeds. (Then) wandering from there he went to Himālaya, the excellent mountain. There he saw the ascetic Mārkaṇḍeya, the excellent sage. His age was equal to that of Brahmā. The sinner saluted his feet from a distance. The best sage Mārkaṇḍeya, having seen him trembling like that, called him to oblige him, and said these words to him: "Why (i.e. due to what) are you overcome with leprosy? Why are you so much condemned?" Thus addressed, he replied to Mārkaṇḍeya, the great sage:

Hemamālin said:

23-27. I am Kubera's attendant, Hemamālin by name. O sage, everyday I fetched a collection of lotuses and offered it to Kubera at the time of his worshipping Śiva; and one day I, with my mind attached to the pleasure (derived) from my wife and with my mind distressed with grief, was not conscious of the time. Therefore, O sage, I was cursed by the angry Kubera. I am overcome with leprosy, and am separated from my wife. Due to my auspicious deeds, I have now come to you, knowing that the heart of the good is naturally capable of obliging others. O best sage, advise me, a sinner.

Mārkaṇḍeya said:

28-34. Since you told the truth here and did not tell a lie, therefore, I am, instructing you in an auspicious vow. Observe the Yoginī-vow in the dark half of Āṣāḍha. Due to the religious merit of this vow, your leprosy will certainly disappear.

Hearing these words of the sage, he fell (i.e. prostrated himself) like a staff on the ground. Being lifted up by the sage, he became extremely delighted. By the advice of Mārkaṇ-ḍeya he observed the vow, with the result that the eighteen kinds of leprosy of him (i.e. from which he was suffering) dis-appeared completely. When by the sage's words he observed the vow, he became happy. O king, the vow of Yoginī is said to be like this. A man who observes the Yoginī-vow obtains the fruit equal to that which a man who would feed eightyeight

thousand brāhmaṇas obtains. (The vow) removes great sins; it gives the fruit of great religious merit. By reciting and listening to this account a man is free from all sins.

CHAPTER FIFTYTHREE

Devaśayanī Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. Which would be (i.e. is) the Ekādaśī in the bright half of Āṣāḍha? What is the name and the manner of it? (i.e. in which manner is it observed?) Tell me about it in detail.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-8. I shall tell you (about that Ekādaśī) named Śayanī which is very auspicious, which gives heaven and salvation, which is great and which removes all sins, merely hearing about which a man would obtain the fruit of a Vājapeya (sacrifice). I have told (you) the truth and the truth (only). Nothing is greater than this for men. O lord of kings, the best one is created by the Creator for the destruction of the sins of sinners. There is no greater (vow) than this which would give salvation. Listen, O king, for this reason that the best position would be obtained by men, the listeners, even by listening to it. Those are the Vaiṣṇavas (i.e. Viṣṇu's devotees) who are greatly devoted to me. In Āṣāḍha, the great god Vāmana (i.e. Viṣṇu) is worshipped. He who has worshipped with lotuses the lotus-eyed Vāmana in the bright half of Āṣāḍha on the day of Kāmikā, has honoured the entire world and has worshipped the three ancient gods (viz. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva); so also, he who has observed the Ekādaśī—the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu—has honoured the entire world and worshipped the three ancient gods.

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

9-10. O Viṣṇu, I have a great doubt here. (Please) listen. How do you sleep (in the ocean)? How have you resorted to

Bali? What do the other people do? Why do they sleep on the ground, O very intelligent one, tell (i.e. explain) this. I have a great doubt.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

11-16. O best king, listen to the great account which removes sins, (and) by merely hearing which all sins would perish. O king, formerly in the Tretā age there was a demon named Bali. Greatly devoted to me he worshipped me everyday. With various sacrifices the demon worshipped me, the ancient one. O king, with great devotion he performed sacrifices and observed vows. Then having deliberated in many ways with Indra, Bṛahaspati and (other) deities, I though worshipped with hymns (by Bali) in various ways, conquered the demons with my Vāmana-form in my fifth incarnation, with (i.e. after taking up) a very fierce form of the nature of (i.e. pervading) the entire universe by prevarication. (Bali, however,) remained firm resorting to truth only. Śukra warded him off saying, 'This is Viṣṇu'.

17-26. O king, I begged for land measured by my three steps and a half. When he offered the water just for conveying his intention, O king, listen, I took up a form like this: I put my feet in the 'Bhūr' world, and I put knees in the 'Bhuvas' world. I put my waist in the 'Svar' world, and belly in the 'Mahas' world. I put my heart in the 'Jana' world, and my neck in 'Tapas' world. I put my face in the 'Satya' world, and head above it. The planets like the Moon, the Sun, so also the constellations, so also gods with Indra, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas and kinnaras praised (me) with various hymns from the Vedas. Seizing Bali by his hand, I occupied the earth in three steps. Then I placed half the step on his head. O king, the demon, my worshipper, went to the lower world. I threw down the demon. What else did I do after it? He was bent with modesty, Viṣṇu was very much pleased. Kāmikā in the bright half of Āṣāḍha is Viṣṇu's day. On that day one of my forms remains resorting to Bali. Another (form) lies on the back of Śeṣa in the ocean, O great king, till the coming (Ekādaśī) in Kārtika. Till then he would be very religious and devoted to best of all duties.

27-37. A man who observes the vow goes to the best position. For this reason, O king, it should be carefully observed.

There is no other (Ekādaśī) than this which is pure and which destroys sins. On that day on which the lord of gods holding a conch, a disc, and a mace sleeps, a man should worship the god holding a conch, a disc, and a mace, and he should especially, with devotion, keep awake at night. (Even) Brahmā is not able to measure the religious merit of (i.e. due to) it. O king, he who, in this way, observes this best vow of Ekādaśī, which removes all sins, gives pleasures and salvation, even though a cāṇḍāla, always lives in my heaven doing what is dear to me. Those men who pass the four months (from the eleventh of the bright half of Āṣāḍha to the eleventh of the bright half of Kārtika) by offering lights, and with the vow of eating on a palāśa-leaf, are dear to me. When Viṣṇu is lying (on Śeṣa), a man should sleep on the ground. He should avoid vegetables in Śrāvaṇa, and curd in Bhādrapada. He should avoid milk in Āśvina, and give up two-leafed (grains) in Kārtika. Or remaining in celibacy, he would reach the highest position. O king, due to the Ekādaśī-vow a man is freed from sins. It should always be observed. It should never be forgotten. That Ekādaśī falling in the dark half between Śayaṇī and Prabodhinī should be observed by a householder; never any other. O king, a man should listen to the great account which removes sins. He (thereby) obtains the fruit of a horse-sacrifice.

CHAPTER FIFTYFOUR

Kāmikā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. What is the name of the Ekādaśī falling in the dark half of Śrāvaṇa? Tell that to us, O Govinda, salutation to you.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2. O king, listen. I shall narrate to you the account that removes sins and which formerly Brahmā told to Nārada who asked (him about it).

Nārada said:

3-4. O lotus-seated lord, I desire to hear from you, what would be (i.e. is) the name of Ekādaśī in the dark half of Śrāvaṇa. Who is its (presiding) deity? What is the manner (in which it is to be observed)? What is its religious merit. O lord tell (this).

Hearing these words of him Brahmā spoke (the following) words:

Brahmā said:

5-7. O Nārada, listen. With the desire for the good of the people, I shall tell you about the Ekādaśī named Kāmikā (which falls) in the dark half of Śrāvaṇa. Merely by hearing about it, one would obtain the fruit of (having performed) a Vājapeya sacrifice. Listen to the fruit which a man who worships the lord of gods holding a conch, a disc, and a mace, gets. Listen to the meritorious fruit of him (i.e. which he gets) who would worship or who meditates upon Hari, Viṣṇu, Madhusūdana, called Śrī Hari.

8-18. He does not obtain that fruit (by bathing) in Gaṅgā, at Kāśī, Naimiṣa or Puṣkara, which he gets by worshipping Kṛṣṇa on that day. He obtains that fruit by worshipping Kṛṣṇa, which he obtains (by bathing) at the time of a portent foreboding a great calamity, when Jupiter is in the Leo sign, in Godāvarī or Daṇḍaka. Both, he who gives the earth along with the oceans and he who observes the Kāmikā-vow, are said to get the same fruit. The man who observes the Kāmikā-vow obtains the fruit which he who would give a milch cow along with articles of household use, gets. The excellent man who would worship god Viṣṇu in Śrāvaṇa, has worshipped gods with gandharvas, uragas and pannagas. Therefore, sin-fearing men should, with all efforts, and according to their capacity, worship Viṣṇu on the Kāmikā day. The Kāmikā-vow is best for the emancipation of those who are plunged in the ocean of the worldly existence, full of the mud of sins. There is no other (vow) than this (so) pure and sin-removing. O Nārada, know it to be like this. Viṣṇu himself has said (so). Know that the fruit of (i.e. got by) the

observers of Kāmikā-vow is much superior to the fruit obtained by those devoted to the knowledge of the supreme spirit. The man who, after having kept awake at night, observes the Kāmikā-vow, does not see the fearful Yama, or does not face a calamity. He does not see (i.e. is not born in) a bad stock due to his observing the Kāmikā-vow. The meditating saints have reached final emancipation after observing the Kāmikā-vow.

19-29. Therefore, with all efforts it should be observed by those who have controlled themselves. The man who would worship Viṣṇu with Tulasī-leaves is not tinged with sin, as a lotus-leaf with water. He obtains that fruit by worshipping Viṣṇu with a Tulasī-leaf, which he obtains by giving a bhāra of gold or fourfold silver of it. Worshipped with gems, pearls, lapis lazuli, corals etc. Viṣṇu is not so pleased as he is with Tulasī-leaves. The sin of him, (right) from his birth, who has worshipped Viṣṇu with Tulasī-sprouts certainly perishes. Salutation to Tulasī which, when seen, destroys the entire heap of sins, which, when touched, purifies the body, which, when saluted, removes diseases, which, when sprinkled over, frightens Yama, which, when planted, brings about the vicinity of lord Kṛṣṇa, and which, when placed at his feet, gives salvation instantly. Citragupta is not able to know the measure of the religious merit of the man who gives (i.e. keeps) a light day and night on the day of Viṣṇu (i.e. on the day sacred to Viṣṇu). The dead ancestors of him whose lamp burns in front of Viṣṇu, remain in heaven and are gratified with nectar. Having burnt a lamp with ghee or sesamum oil, he, being honoured with a hundred crores of lamps, goes to the Sun's world. I have told you this importance of Kāmikā. Men should, therefore, observe it which removes all sins, which removes (the sin of) the murder of a brāhmaṇa, which removes (the sin of) causing abortion. It gives (them) the abode of Viṣṇu, and gives the fruit of great religious merit. A man endowed with faith, on hearing about the greatness of this, obtains (i.e. goes to) Viṣṇu's world, and is free from all sins.

CHAPTER FIFTYFIVE

Putradā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. What would be (i.e. is) the name of the Ekādaśī (falling) in the bright half of Śrāvaṇa? O Madhusūdana, please favour me and tell it to me.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-9. O king, listen attentively to this great sin-removing account, by hearing which the fruit would be that of a Vājapeya. At the beginning of Dvāpara age formerly in the city of Māhiṣmatī a king named Mahījit ruled over his kingdom. The kingdom did not give happiness to him who was sonless. A sonless man does not have happiness in this world or in the next. He passed a long time in the thought of (i.e. expecting) a son. But the king did not have son giving all happiness to men. Noticing himself to be advanced in age the king became anxious. Then being in the assembly among his subjects he said these words: "O people, in this (my) life I have not committed a sin. I have not put into my treasury money that is unjustly earned. I have never taken away a brāhmaṇa's wealth, nor the wealth of a deity. I have never taken away another's deposit, which (act) causes great sin; I have looked after the people like my own sons, and I have conquered the land righteously. I have inflicted punishment on the wicked, even though they were like my brother or son. The eminent persons were always honoured by me and I have not hated people.

10-17. O best brāhmaṇas, think over as to why a son is not born in the house of me who am thus talking about a righteous path.

Hearing these words the brāhmaṇas along with the subjects and the family-priest held consultation and went to a dense forest. Here and there they saw hermitages resorted to by sages. Desiring the well-being of the king, they saw the best sage Lomaśa who was guileless, who was (all) alone practising a severe penance, who was ancient, who did not eat food, who had con-

quered his soul, and who had controlled his anger, who knew the truth about righteousness, who was proficient in all sacred texts, who had (lived) a long life, who was magnanimous, who had hair, and who resembled Brahmā. As each kalpa passed, one of his hair withered. Therefore, this great sage who was omniscient, was named Lomaśa. Seeing him all were glad and came near him. They saluted him according to decorum, as he deserved and as laid down (in the sacred texts). Bowing with modesty, they said to one another: "Due to our good fortune only we have come across this best sage." Seeing them bowing like that, the best sage said:

Lomaśa said:

18-19. Why have you come here? Tell it to me with the reason. Why were you delighted on seeing me and why are you praising me? I shall certainly do what would be beneficial to you. There is no doubt that the existence of (people) like me is for obliging others.

The people said:

20-25. Listen. We shall tell the reason of our arrival. We have come to you to get our doubt removed. There is none greater than Brahmā except you. Therefore, for some work we have approached you. This king Mahījit by name is at present sonless. O brāhmaṇa, we are his subjects, looked after by him like his own sons. Seeing him sonless, and distressed by his grief, we have, entertaining a firm thought, come here to practise penance. O sage, give instruction as to how the king would have a son.

Hearing these words of them, he remained in meditation for some time. Knowing his former birth, the sage replied:

Lomaśa said:

26-30. In the previous existence he was a poor vaiśya, and doing evil deeds and engaged in trade he roamed from village to village. On the tenth day in the bright half of Jyeṣṭha, when the Sun had reached the centre of the sky (he saw) a pond on the border of a village. Seeing the well (pond?) containing water

he decided to drink water. At once there came a cow with her calf. Being oppressed by thirst and by heat, she drank water. Preventing her who was drinking water, he himself drank it. Due to that sinful act the king became sonless. Due to the religious merit of some (former) existence he obtained the kingdom free from nuisance.

The people said:

31. It is heard in (i.e. learnt from) the Purāṇa that sin perishes due to religious merit. Advise about the religious merit due to which the sin would perish, and by your grace the king would have a son.

Lomaśa said:

32-44. O men, observe the Ekādaśī which (falls in) the bright half of Śrāvaṇa, is called Putradā, and gives desired objects.

Hearing this, and saluting the sage, they went (back) to the city and observed that vow duly, justly and by keeping awake. The people gave its very pure religious merit to the king. When the religious merit was given, the queen had conception. When the time of delivery arrived, she gave birth to a bright son. A pavitraka (a ring) was fashioned in honour of Vāsudeva on the twelfth day of the bright half of Śrāvaṇa when the Sun was in Cancer. (The pavitraka was fashioned with) gold, silver, copper, silken threads or silken cloth and lotuses, kuśa, kāśa, or with cotton cut by a brāhmaṇa woman. Having bathed he should purify the thread of three strands. On the previous day, at the time separated by the times of milking the cow, preliminary consecration (should be done). Having saluted the brāhmaṇas and the feet of the preceptor, he should keep awake with the auspicious sounds of songs. Brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, bhillas, so also śūdras,—all following their own practices, should devoutly fashion the pavitraka. Then he should duly give it to his preceptor. He should also honour the brāhmaṇas—Viṣṇu's devotees —with sandal and flowers. A brāhmaṇa should offer it to Viṣṇu with the hymn: *Ato devā.* A śūdra should do so with the root-hymns to Śiva as to Viṣṇu. Every year men should fashion

pavitrakas. So also those who desire pleasures and salvation in the mundane existence which is an ocean of grief. He who does not fashion the pavitraka according to the rule, has his worship —i.e. the worship of Viṣṇu's devotee—(rendered) fruitless. Hearing the importance of this (vow) a man is free from sins. Having obtained in this world the pleasure from his son, he would go to heaven after death.

CHAPTER FIFTYSIX

Ajā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. O Janārdana, I desire to hear what would be (i.e. is) the name of the Ekādaśī falling in the dark half of Bhādrapada. (Please) tell it.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-11. O king, listen attentively. I shall tell (you) in detail. This Ekādaśī is called Ajā and it destroys all sins. The sins of him who on this day observes this vow after worshipping Viṣṇu, perish; (so also they perish) even by listening to the vow. O king, there is nothing greater than this, beneficial for both the worlds. I have told you the truth. My words are not false. Formerly there was a king known as Hariścandra. He was an emperor, true to his word, and the lord of the whole earth. Due to the acquisition of (the fruit of) some act he was deprived of his kingdom. He sold his wife and son and also himself. The righteous king became the slave of a cāṇḍāla. O lord of kings resorting to truth he removed the garments of the dead; (but) that best king never swerved from truth. In this way the king passed many years. Then the king, full of anxiety, became very much distressed. "What should I do? Where should I go? How shall I escape (this)?" When he who was plunged into the ocean of sin, was thinking like this, a certain sage knowing that the king was distressed came (there). Brahmā has created brāh-

maṇas to oblige others. The best king, seeing the excellent sage, bowed (to him).

12-23. Joining the palms of his hands, he stood before Gautama. He told (him) his account accompanied by (i.e. full of) grief. Hearing the king's words, Gautama was amazed. The sage instructed the king in this vow. The sage instructed the king (in the observance of) the vow. "O king, the very auspicious Ekādaśī falling in the dark half of Bhādrapada called Ajā and giving great merit has come. O king, observe its vow. Your sin will come to an end. Due to your good fortune it will fall on the seventh day (from today). Engaging yourself in a fast; keep awake at night. When thus this vow is observed, your sin will certainly perish. O best king, due to the efficacy of your religious merit, I have come (here)." Telling like this, the sage disappeared. Hearing the sage's words, the king observed the excellent vow. When the vow was observed, the king's sin perished in a moment. O best king, listen to the efficacy of this vow. There would be the end of the misery which (otherwise) would be had for many years. Due to the efficacy of the vow the king overcame his misery. He was united with his wife and lived with his son. Drums sounded in the sky and shower of flowers fell from the sky. By the efficacy of the Ekādaśī he got the kingdom free from (any) nuisance. Along with (the residents of) his city and his paraphernalia, Hariścandra obtained heaven. O king, those men who observe the vow of this kind, get free from all sins and go to heaven. By reciting (about this) vow or even by listening to (a man) would obtain the fruit of a horse-sacrifice.

CHAPTER FIFTYSEVEN

Padmā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. What would be (i.e. is) the name of the Ekādaśī in the bright half of Bhādrapada? O Keśava, tell about its deity and manner (in which it is observed).

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2. O king, I shall tell you the wonderful account which Brahmā narrated to the magnanimous Nārada.

Nārada said:

3. O Brahman, salutation to you. Tell me of what name would be the Ekādaśī in the bright half of Bhādrapada? I desire to hear this for propitiating Viṣṇu.

Brahmā said:

4-13. O best sage, you are Viṣṇu's devotee. You have indeed asked well. In this world there is nothing superior to this day of Viṣṇu. This Ekādaśī in the bright half of Bhādrapada is known as Padmā. On it Viṣṇu is worshipped. (This) excellent vow should be observed. I shall tell you an auspicious old account by just hearing which (even) a great sin perishes. A royal sage, Māndhātṛ by name, born in the family of Vivasvat, was a valorous emperor who was true to his word. He righteously looked after his subjects like his own sons. In his kingdom there was no famine. There were no agonies or diseases. His subjects were healthy and prospered with wealth and grains. The wealth in the treasury of the king was earned justly. All castes and stages of life abided by their duties. In the kingdom of that king the land resembled the desire-yielding cow. When he was ruling like this, many groups of years passed. And one year there was indeed the maturity of his acts. The cloud(s) did not shower (water) in his country for three years. By that his subjects, oppressed by hunger, were frustrated. They were without Svāhā (i.e. offerings to gods), Svadhā (i.e. oblations to dead ancestors), Vaṣaṭkāra (i.e. oblations to deities) and Vedic study. Due to his misfortune, his country was troubled by (ill) luck. Then the subjects gathered and said these words to the king:

The subjects said:

14-16. O best king, listen to the words of your subjects. In the Purāṇa(s) the wise have called *āpa* (water) *nārā* (water). That is the lord's abode. Therefore, he is called *Nārāyaṇa*. Viṣṇu, the lord in the form of rain, is present everywhere. He

alone causes rain, from rain comes up food and from that subjects (spring up). O best king, without it the subjects perish. O king, do that by which security of possession would take place.

The king said:

17-26. You have told the truth. You have told no lie. Since food is called Brahman, everything is placed in food. Beings spring up from food. The world exists due to food. This is heard in (i.e. from) the very extensive Purāṇa (literature). Due to the bad behaviour of the kings the subjects would be oppressed. (Even) thinking with my intellect I do not see anything like this done by me. Yet with a desire for the well-being of the subjects I shall strive. The king having innumerable attendants thought like this, (and) saluting the Creator went into a dense forest. He went to principal sages and to hermitages resorted to by ascetics. Then the king saw the sage Aṅgiras, Brahmā's son, who had brightened the quarters with his lustre and who was, as it were, another Brahmā. Seeing him, the delighted king got down from his vehicle, and the restrained one, with the palms of his hands joined, saluted his feet. Having greeted him with blessings (like 'May it be well with you'), he asked about the well-being of the king in the seven constituents (of the kingdom). The king told it and asked him about his health. He who was offered a seat and had received a respectful offering, sat near him. The king, asked by the sage about the reason of his arrival, replied:

The king said:

27-28. O revered one, when I was righteously looking after the earth, there was a drought. I do not see the reason for this. I have come to you to get my doubt removed. Give delight to my subjects by (securing) their welfare.

The sage said:

29-31. O king, this is the Kṛta age, best among the ages. In this (age) people are devoted to Brahman, and Dharma has four feet. In this age (only) brāhmaṇas practice penance, not other people. O king, in your country a cāṇḍāla is practising penance.

For this reason the cloud does not shower. Make an effort to kill him, by which (your) sin will come to an end.

The king said:

32. I shall not kill that innocent one practising penance. Instruct me in righteousness which will destroy the trouble.

The sage said:

33-41. If this is so, then, O king, observe the Ekādaśī-vow. In the bright half of Bhādrapada (falls the Ekādaśī) well-known as Padmā. By its power there will certainly be good rainfall. This one gives all prosperity and destroys all calamities. O king, observe its vow along with your subjects and attendants.

Having heard these words of the sage, the king came home. In the bright half of the month of Bhādrapada he along with all his subjects and the four castes observed the vow of Padmā. O king, when thus the vow was observed, the cloud showered. Land was inundated with water and was resplendent with corn. By the power of the best sage people got happiness. For this reason this excellent vow should be thus observed. On this (day) a man should give a pitcher full of water along with curd and rice and well covered, so also an umbrella and (a pair of) sandals to a brāhmaṇa. (He should pray:) "Salutations to you, O wise Govinda, called Śravaṇa. Destroying the streams of (my) sins, give me all pleasures. Give pleasures and salvation and happiness to people." By reciting or listening to (this account a man) is free from all sins.

CHAPTER FIFTYEIGHT

Indirā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. (Please) favour me and tell me, O Viṣṇu, as to what would be (i.e. is) the name of the Ekādaśī in the dark half of Āśvina.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-10a. The name (of the Ekādaśī falling) in the dark half of Āśvina is Indirā. By its power (even) a great sin perishes. It gives a (good) cause to the dead ancestors that have gone to (i.e. born in) a low stock. O king, listen attentively to the sin-removing great story. By hearing it a man would obtain the fruit of a Vājapeya sacrifice. Formerly, O king, in Kṛtayuga there was a prince named Indrasena. He was the lord of Māhiṣmatī. That king, endowed with glory, righteously looked after (his kingdom). He possessed sons and grandsons and had wealth and grains. The king, the lord of Māhiṣmatī, was solely devoted to Viṣṇu. The king repeating internally Viṣṇu's names giving salvation, duly passed his time and meditated upon the Supreme Spirit. When the king, one day, was comfortably seated in his assembly, there came down from the sky the sage Nārada. Seeing him to have arrived, he, getting up with the palms of his hands folded, duly honoured him and seated him on a seat. The best king said to the sage seated comfortably:

The king said:

10b-11. O best sage, by your grace everything of me is prosperous. By seeing you all my sacrifices and rites have become fruitful. O divine sage, favour me and tell me the reason of your arrival.

Nārada said:

12-18. O best king, listen to my wonderful words. O best king, from Brahmā's world I had gone to the world of Yama. Devoutly honoured by Yama, I sat on an excellent seat. The religious, truthful son of the Sun (i.e. Yama) waited upon me.

In the assembly of the deity of Śrāddhas (i.e. of Yama), I saw your father, doer of many righteous acts, there as a result of a fault in a vow. He has told (i.e. given) a message (for you). Listen to it, O lord of people. "A king known as Indrasena is the lord of Māhiṣmatī. Tell him, O brāhmaṇa, that I am staying with Yama due to some hindrance, due to my former existence. O son, giving me the religious merit of the Indirā(-vow) send me to heaven." Thus addressed, I have come to you, O king. O king, for (the attainment of) heaven by your father, observe the Indirā(-vow). By the power of that vow your father will go to heaven.

The king said:

19. O revered one, favour me and tell me about the Indirā-vow. In what manner is it to be done? In which fortnight, and on which date?

Nārada said:

20-31a. O lord of kings, listen. I (shall) tell you the manner of this auspicious vow (i.e. in which way it is to be observed). On the auspicious tenth day in the dark half of the month of Āśvina, a man, with a devout mind, should bathe in the morning. Then, bathing in the mid-day he should be composed; and with faith he should perform the Śrāddha to gratify his manes. Then eating once only, he should sleep on the ground at night. When on the Ekādaśī day the bright morning has dawned, he should wash his face without cleaning his teeth; and should devoutly take up the vow of fasting. "Remaining without food and without all pleasures to-day, I shall eat tomorrow, O lotus-eyed one. O Viṣṇu, be my refuge." Having imposed such a restriction (upon him) he should at mid-day duly bath the tip of the Śālagrāma stone. Having worshipped Viṣṇu with incense, sandal etc., he should at night keep awake in the vicinity of Viṣṇu. Then, when the morning of the twelfth day comes, he should after worshipping Viṣṇu duly perform the Śrāddha. Endowed with faith, he should perform the Śrāddha to gratify his manes. That Śrāddha which is offered with the flour of wheat would be done (in a) pure (way). So also would be the Śrāddha offered with barley, rice, sesamum-seeds, beans,

wheat and grams. O king, having honoured brāhmaṇas with gifts, he should worship them. (Then) controlled in speech, he himself should eat with his kinsmen, daughter's son and sons etc. O king, being careful observe the vow in this manner. O king, your dead ancestors will go to Viṣṇu's world.

31b-36. Speaking thus to the king, the sage disappeared, O king. The king, along with (the inmates of) his harem, and with sons and servants, observed the excellent vow in accordance with the manner told (by the sage). O son of Kuntī, when the vow was observed, a shower of flowers fell from the sky. His father, mounted on Garuḍa, went to Viṣṇu's abode. The royal sage Indrasena too, having ruled his kingdom free from nuisance and having installed his son on the throne, himself went to heaven. I have told you the importance of the Indirā-vow. A man, on reciting or listening to it is free from all sins. After enjoying all pleasures here (i.e. in this world) he would live for a long time in Viṣṇu's world.

CHAPTER FIFTYNINE

Pāpāṅkuśā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. O Madhusūdana, be pleased and tell as to what would be (i.e. is) the name of the Ekādaśī falling in the bright half of Āśvina.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-10. O lord of kings, listen. I shall tell you about the importance of the Ekādaśī which would fall in the bright half of Āśvina—the importance which destroys sins. The great (Ekādaśī) is known as Pāpāṅkuśā and removes all sins. On that day a man should worship me named Padmanābha. That fruit which a man with his senses well-controlled for a long time gets, and which leads to the acquisition of all desired objects, and which

gives men heaven and salvation, is obtained by saluting the eagle-bannered god (Viṣṇu). A man, full of delusions, having committed many sins, does not go to hell after having saluted Viṣṇu, the remover of all sins. All those sacred places and holy abodes that are there on the earth, all of them are reached (by a man) by means of reciting Viṣṇu's appellations. Those men who have submitted themselves to god Śārṅgadhara Viṣṇu, never suffer from the torments of the world of Yama. A man, after having accidentally fasted on an Ekādaśī day, does not suffer from the torments of Yama even after having committed a fearful sin. A man who being a devotee of Viṣṇu, censures Śiva, does not go to Viṣṇu's world. He certainly goes to hell. A Pāśupata who being a devotee of Śiva, censures Viṣṇu, is roasted in Raurava (hell) till the (periods of the) fourteen Indras are over.

11-22. Like the vow of Viṣṇu which destroys sins, there is no other (vow) in the three worlds that purifies (men). O king, as long as a living being would not fast on the auspicious day of Viṣṇu, sins would remain in his body. Thousands of horse sacrifices and hundreds of Rājasūya sacrifices do not equal to the sixteenth portion of the Ekādaśī-fast. There is no (other) vow like the Ekādaśī-vow. Even those who observe it under some pretext, do not go to Yama. This (vow) gives heaven and salvation. It gives good health of the body. This gives a wife sons; this gives wealth and friends. O king, Gaṅgā, or Gayā, or Kāśī, or Puṣkara, or Kurukṣetra is not more auspicious than the day sacred to Viṣṇu. O king, having fasted at night and fasted on the day sacred to Viṣṇu the position of Viṣṇu is obtained without trouble. A man would emancipate ten members on his mother's side, ten on his father's side, and ten on his wife's side, O lord of kings. Men (observing this) have four arms, divine forms, have banners of (Garuḍa) the enemy of serpents, and white garments, and go to Viṣṇu's abode. A man having fasted on an Ekādaśī (day) in his childhood, youth, or old age does not face a calamity, O best king. A man observing a fast on the Pāpāṅkuśā (Ekādaśī) in the bright half of Āśvina is freed from all sins and goes to Viṣṇu's world. A man having given gold, sesamum-seeds, land, a cow, food and water, so also

(a pair of sandals), an umbrella (to a brāhmaṇa) does not see Yama.

23-28. He whose days come and go without meritorious acts, does not, though breathing, live, like the bellows of a blacksmith. O best king, even a poor man should make his day fruitful by always, and according to his capacity, doing acts like a bath and (giving) gifts. The doers of meritorious acts like a sacrifice, a bath, muttering (of hymns etc.), meditation, sacrificial sessions do not see (i.e. suffer from) the torments of Yama. Persons doing such meritorious acts are seen to be living a long life, possessing wealth, born in a noble family and free from diseases. What is the use of talking much in this matter. People go to (i.e. suffer from) calamities by means of unrighteousness. By means of righteous acts they go up to heaven. No doubt should be raised in this case. O sinless king, I have thus told you about the importance of Pāpāṅkuśā, about which you had asked me. What else do you want to hear?

CHAPTER SIXTY

Ramā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. O Janārdana, through favour and love for me, tell me what would be (i.e. is) the name of the Ekādaśī falling in the dark half of Kārtika.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2-12a. O lord of kings, listen. I shall tell you. In the dark half of Kārtika falls the very auspicious Ekādaśī. It is called Ramā. It is great and removes great sins. O king, as the occasion has come, I shall tell you its importance. O king, formerly there was a king, Mucukunda by name. He had formed friendship with (Indra) the lord of gods. He also was fully friendly with Yama, Varuṇa, Kubera, and Bibhīṣaṇa, O king. That king was

a great devotee of Viṣṇu and was true to his word. When he was ruling over his kingdom from which troublesome persons were removed, a daughter Candrabhāgā, (resembling) the excellent river (Candrabhāgā) was (born) in his house. She was given (in marriage) to Śobhana, the son of Candrasena. Once he came to his father-in-law's house, O king. The very meritorious day of the Ekādaśī-vow (also) came. When the day of the vow came, Candrabhāgā thought: 'O lord of gods, what will happen? My husband is very weak. He is not able to put up with hunger, and my father's rule is strict.' When the tenth day comes, his drum is beaten: 'Do not eat, do not eat on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu.' Hearing the sound of the drum, Śobhana said to his wife: "O dear one, what should I do? Advise me, O beautiful one."

Candrabhāgā said:

12b-15a. O lord, today nobody in my father's house is to eat (anything). On the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu elephants, horses, (their) young ones, so also other beasts are not to eat grass or (drink) water. Then, O dear one, how would human beings eat on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu? O dear one, if you eat (anything today) then you will be censured. Thinking like this to yourself, make your mind strong.

Śobhana said:

15b-23. O dear one, these words are true. I shall fast (today). Whatever is laid down by destiny will just take place in the same way.

Thus resolving, he observed the vow. With his body oppressed with hunger, he became extremely distressed. While he was thinking like this, the sun went to the western mountain. That night enhanced the joy of Viṣṇu's devotees engaged in worshipping Viṣṇu, and with their minds attached to keeping awake. (But) it became very painful to Śobhana. At the time of sunrise, Śobhana expired. The king got him cremated with (pieces of) wood fit for a king. Candrabhāgā did not abandon her body with her husband. Having performed his funeral rites, she remained in her father's house. (And) O greatest king, due to

the power of the Ramā-vow, Śobhana reached the divine charming city on the peak of the Mandara mountain, which (city) was excellent with innumerable qualities. It was adorned with large houses with golden pillars, and gems and lapis lazuli, and with beautiful crystals of different shapes.

24-28. Being praised by gandharvas, and waited upon by celestial nymphs, Śobhana mounted upon the throne. He had very white umbrella (held over his head) and chowries (were waved). He had (put on) a crown and ear-rings. He was adorned with necklaces and bracelets. There Śobhana shone like a great king of kings. In the city of Mucukunda there was (a brāhmaṇa) known as Somaśarman. The brāhmaṇa, wandering for pilgrimage, saw him. Recognising him to be the king's son-in-law he approached him. Śobhana too, knowing that Somaśarman had come, quickly got up from his seat and saluted the best brāhmaṇa. He asked him about the well-being of his father-in-law, the king, and about his wife Candrabhāgā, and about the city.

Somaśarman said:

29-31a. O king, there is well-being in your father's house. Candrabhāgā is all right and in the city everywhere there is well-being. O king, tell me your own account. It is a great wonder. Such a wonderful and beautiful city has not been seen by anyone. O king, tell me this: How did you obtain this?

Śobhana said:

31b-32. In the dark half of Kārtika falls the Ekādaśī called Ramā. Having fasted on that day, I have secured this unstable city. O best brāhmaṇa, do that by which it will be stable.

The brāhmaṇa said:

33. O lord of kings, how (i.e. why) is it unstable? How will it be stable? Tell me the truth. Then I shall do it, not otherwise.

Śhobana said:

34-35. O brāhmaṇa, I observed this best vow without faith. Therefore, I think, it is unstable. Listen (by which) it will be

stable. The very beautiful Candrabhāgā is Mucukunda's daughter. Tell her this account. (Then) it will be stable.

Kṛṣṇa said:

36. Hearing his words, he went to the city of Mucukunda; (and) the brāhmaṇa narrated the entire account to Candrabhāgā.

Somaśarman said:

37. O auspicious one, I actually saw your beloved husband. I (also) saw his unconquerable city resembling (that of) Indra. He described it to be unstable. Do that by which it will be stable.

Candrabhāgā said:

38-45. O brāhmaṇa-sage, take me, desiring to see my husband, there. By means of the merit of my vow I shall make the city stable. O brāhmaṇa, do that by which we two shall be united. Great religious merit is obtained by bringing together the separated ones.

Hearing this, Somaśarman went with her to Vāmadeva's hermitage near the Mandara mountain. Vāmadeva listened to the full account told by them. He sprinkled (water over) the bright Candrabhāgā with Vedic hymns. By the power of the hymn recited by the sage, and due to observing the vow on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu her body became divine and she obtained a divine condition. With her eyes dilated due to great joy she approached her husband. Seeing his wife to have come, Śobhana was very much delighted. Calling her he made her sit on his left side. Then Candrabhāgā said (these) dear words to her husband: "O dear one, listen to the beneficial words: I have religious merit. When I crossed the eighth year (while living) in my father's house.

46-54. I have since then, observed the Ekādaśī vow in the manner as it was told and with my mind full of faith. By the power of that (religious merit) the city will be stable. It will be rich in all desired objects till the final deluge." O best king, in this way she, enjoying divine pleasures, of a divine form, and adorned with divine ornaments, rejoiced with her husband.

Śobhana, of a divine body, also rejoiced with her on the peak of Mandara mountain by the power of the Ramā-vow. This vow is like the desire-yielding gem or like the desire-yielding cow. O king, I have told you about the (Ekādaśī) called Ramā. O sinless one, you have heard its full importance. I have told you the sin-destroying importance of the vows of the Ekādaśīs of both the fortnights. As is the (one of the) dark (fortnight), so is the (one of the) bright fortnight. No discrimination should be done between the two. Ekādaśī, when observed, gives pleasures and salvation to men. As a white cow is like a black one—as their milk is similar, similarly the two Ekādaśīs are said to give a similar fruit. A man who listens to the importance of the Ekādaśī-vows is freed from all sins and is honoured in Viṣṇu's world.

CHAPTER SIXTYONE

Prabodhinī Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1. O Kṛṣṇa, I have duly heard from you the importance of Ramā (Ekādaśī). O you who respect (others, now) tell me about the Ekādaśī falling in the bright half of Kārtika.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

2. O king, I shall tell you about (the Ekādaśī) falling in the bright half of Kārtika, as it was told by Brahmā, the creator of the worlds, to Nārada.

Nārada said:

3. Tell me in detail the importance of the Prabodhinī (Ekādaśī) on which Viṣṇu, the propounder of righteousness, keeps awake.

Brahmā said:

4-11. O best sage, listen to the greatness of Prabodhinī which destroys sins, which increases religious merit, and which

gives salvation to men of good minds. Till the Prabodhinī of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu (falling) in Kārtika does not arrive, all the holy places including the oceans and the lakes roar. O best brāhmaṇa, Gaṅgā-Bhāgīrathī roars on the earth till the Ekādaśī awakening Viṣṇu (and falling) in Kārtika and destroying sins has not come. A man would obtain even through one fast on the Prabodhinī (day) (that which is obtained by means of) thousands of horse-sacrifices, and hundreds of Rājasūya sacrifices. The Haribodhinī (i.e. Prabodhinī Ekādaśī) gives, O son, even that which is difficult to obtain, which is difficult to reach, and which is not within the range of the three worlds, even though it is not asked for. The Haribodhinī, when fasted on, gives people splendour, wealth, intellect, kingdom, happiness and riches. This (Ekādaśī) that destroys sins, burns even when it is fasted on once the sins that are declared and have the size of Meru and Mandara. Keeping awake at night on this (Ekādaśī) burns like a heap of cotton the sin committed in thousands of former existences.

12-20. O best sage, he who, according to his nature, duly observes a fast on Prabodhinī, gets the fruit as declared (in sacred texts). O best among the excellent sages, a man who duly does the good act as enjoined, gets the fruit (as large) as Meru. He who without the proper manner does a good act as much (i.e. as big) as Meru, obtains its fruit just of the measure of an atom, O Nārada. The dead ancestors of those who will devoutly observe (the vow of) Prabodhinī, are delighted and live in Viṣṇu's world. A man, even after having committed a terrible sin like the murder of a brāhmaṇa, is freed from the hellish misery and goes to the highest place of Viṣṇu (on observing the Prabodhinī-vow). Having kept awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, the sins of a man are washed. O brāhmaṇa, that fruit difficult to obtain by means of the sacrifices like the horse-sacrifice, is easily obtained by means of keeping awake on Prabodhinī. A man obtains that fruit by keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, which he would get by bathing in all holy places and by giving gold or land. He who has observed the Prabodhinī in Kārtika, is alone born fortunate and has himself only purified his family. Though death is certain for men, wealth and body are uncertain.

21-25. Realising this, O best sage, the day of (i.e. sacred to)

Viṣṇu should be observed (as a fast-day). All the holy places that are there in the three worlds, are (present) in the house of the one who properly observes the (fast on) the Prabodhinī. What is the use of many (other) acts of religious merit for him who has observed (a fast on) the Prabodhinī (Ekādaśī)? This Haribodhinī (falling) in Kārtika gives sons and grandsons. He (alone) is wise, is a meditating saint, an ascetic, and has controlled his senses (who fasts on Prabodhinī). He (who) fasts on Haribodhinī, gets pleasures and salvation. This one, helping the essence of righteousness, is very dear to Viṣṇu. A man who devoutly observes (this vow) would enjoy pleasures. By fasting on Prabodhinī a man does not enter a womb (i.e. he is not reborn).

26-33. Therefore, giving up all other meritorious acts, a man should observe (this vow). All the sin committed through deeds, mind and speech is washed by Viṣṇu on a man's keeping awake on Prabodhinī. All that a man does like a bath, (giving) a gift, muttering (hymns), worship in honour of Viṣṇu on Prabodhinī is inexhaustible. Those men who devoutly worship god Viṣṇu on that day and observe a fast on that day, are free from sins incurred during hundreds of existences. O son, this is a great vow which destroys a stream of great sins. A man should duly fast on the day of Viṣṇu's being awake and should please Viṣṇu with this vow. Illuminating all quarters he goes to Viṣṇu's abode. Men desiring brilliance and wealth should carefully observe this. Viṣṇu worshipped on this day, washes men's sin which is accumulated (by them) in their childhood, in their youth, and in their old age, so also the sin committed during hundreds of existences, even if it is small or great. This one brings wealth and grains, is auspicious, is great and removes all sins.

34-41a. By fasting on it through devotion for Viṣṇu, there would be nothing difficult to obtain. The fruit which is obtained (on bathing) at the lunar or the solar eclipse, is said to be thousandfold by keeping awake on the Prabodhinī. All that—bath, (giving) gifts, muttering (hymns), sacrifice, self-study, Viṣṇu's worship, done on Prabodhinī becomes crorefold. All the religious merit that would be earned by a man from his birth, becomes fruitless if the vow in Kārtika is not observed. O Nārada, a man who would spend Kārtika without observing the vow of Viṣṇu, does not obtain the fruit of the religious

merit earned during his existence. Therefore, O best brāhmaṇa, with all efforts he should serve Viṣṇu, the god of gods. It gives all desired objects. A man devoted to Viṣṇu, should avoid others' food in Kārtika. By avoiding others' food, he would obtain the fruit of the Cāndrāyaṇa-vow. A man who would spend every day of Kārtika in (pursuing) sacred texts would burn all (his) sins, and would obtain the fruit of a myriad sacrifices.

41b-48a. Viṣṇu is not so much pleased with sacrifices, gifts, and Vājapeya etc. as he is pleased with the narration of stories from the sacred texts in Kārtika. Those who narrate Viṣṇu's account or listen to (his) auspicious accounts, or to half a verse or a quarter of a verse in Kārtika obtain the fruit of (having given) a hundred cows. Giving up all other righteous acts, sacred texts should be discussed and grasped in Kārtika before (the image of) Viṣṇu, O great sage. O best sage, he who, with (a desire for) the highest good and any (other) desire, narrates (or listens to) Viṣṇu's accounts in Kārtika, would emancipate a hundred (members) of his family. A man who regularly listens to Viṣṇu's account, especially in Kārtika, obtains the fruit of (having given) a thousand cows. O sage, he who listens to Viṣṇu's account on the day of his awakening (i.e. on the Prabodhinī Ekādaśī) obtains that fruit (which is obtained) by giving (the earth) with the seven islands. O best sage, eternal world (of gods) is said to be reached by them who, after hearing the divine account of Viṣṇu, honour according to their own capacity the knower (i.e. the reader) of the account.

48b-54. O Nārada, that man who would pass Kārtika in singing and in pursuing sacred texts, is not seen by me to be reborn. O sage, the man, a meritorious soul, who does (i.e. engages himself in) singing, dancing, (playing on) musical instruments, and (listens to) the auspicious account of Viṣṇu, remains above the three worlds. With many flowers, with many fruits and camphor, agaru and saffron, Viṣṇu's worship should be done on the Prabodhinī day in Kārtika, from which immeasurable religious merit is obtained, O best sage. At the time of keeping awake on the Prabodhinī (night) respectful offering with various kinds of fruits should be made after taking water in a conch. A crore-fold of fruit which (is obtained by bathing)

at all holy places, that fruit which (is had) by means of all gifts, is got by giving a respectful offering on the Prabodhinī day. After that the preceptor should be honoured with a meal, a covering etc., so also with gifts in order to please the Disc-holder (i.e. Viṣṇu), O divine sage.

55-68. A man who listens to Bhāgavata, and a man who would listen to a Purāṇa, would obtain for every letter (of the text) the fruit due to the gift of a tawny cow. O best sage, for him who observes, according to his capacity, the vow (in honour) of Viṣṇu, as has been laid down, salvation is certainly secured. Madhusūdana, the eagle-bannered god, worshipped with one ketakī-leaf, becomes very much pleased for a thousand years. The fire of hell is put out by seeing him who would worship Viṣṇu with agasti-leaves, O divine sage. Viṣṇu, the greatest person, when worshipped with mango-leaves in Kārtika, gives desired objects, as at the lunar or the solar eclipse. He who, leaving all (other) flowers, devoutly worships Viṣṇu with mango-blossoms, would obtain the fruit of a horse-sacrifice. O child, all the sin of those, (even) of a myriad existences, who offer Tulasī-leaves and flowers to Viṣṇu in Kārtika, would burn. Tulasī is auspicious if it is always seen, touched, meditated upon, described, praised, planted, sprinkled and worshipped. O sage, those who everyday are devoted to Tulasī in (these) nine ways, produce religious merit lasting for thousands of crores of yugas. O sage, as long as Tulasī planted by men on the earth grows with branches, twigs, seeds, flowers and leaves, (the persons) that are born or will be born in their families, live in Viṣṇu's house for (many) thousand years till universal deluge. That fruit which exists in all flowers and leaves, is obtained by (offering) a Tulasī-leaf (to Viṣṇu) in Kārtika. Seeing that Kārtika has arrived, great Viṣṇu should be regularly worshipped with tender Tulasī-leaves. The religious merit obtained by the performance of hundreds of sacrifices and giving many gifts is obtained by worshipping Viṣṇu with Tulasī-leaves in Kārtika.

CHAPTER SIXTYTWO

Kamalā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1-4. O revered one, I desire to listen to the best of the vows (in honour) of Viṣṇu, which removes all sins and gives (its) fruit to those who observe it. O Janārdana, tell me the account of Viṣṇu's month; what is the manner in which it is observed? What is its fruit? Which deity is worshipped during it? O Janārdana, tell me about the vow that is observed when the intercalary month arrives. What is the fruit of what gift? What should be done by men, O lord? In what a bath (should be taken)? What (hymns) should be muttered? What is said to be the manner of the worship? Which best food should be eaten in this Puruṣottama-month?

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

5-18. Through love for you, I shall, O best king, narrate the sin-destroying greatness of the Puruṣottama-month. That Ekādaśī day which would come when the intercalary month has arrived, is called Kamalā, and is the best of days. By the power of that vow Lakṣmī would be favourable. One who observes (this) vow, should get up in the early part of the day, and having remembered Viṣṇu, he should duly bathe and should observe the vow. Muttering (of his names) in the house has one-fold effect, while that of doing it in a river has double that effect. (The effect) is more than a thousand-fold (if the muttering is done) in a cow-pen; and is a hundred-fold (if it is done) at auspicious, holy places and in the proximity of deities. (The effect) is a lakh(-fold if the muttering) is done near Tulasī and is infinite (if it is done) near (the image of) Viṣṇu. In Avantī there was an excellent brāhmaṇa, Śivaśarman (by name). He had five sons. The youngest one was hurtful. Then (i.e. so) he was abandoned by his father and forsaken by kinsmen and relatives. Due to the power of his bad deeds he went to a very distant forest. Once fortunately he went to the best holy place. Emaciated with hunger, having a melancholy face, he bathed in Triveṇī. Oppressed by hunger, there he looked for sages' hermi-

tages. In the Puruṣottama month and the gathering of people, there he saw the excellent hermitage of the sage Harimitra. From the mouth of the brāhmaṇas, telling a sin-destroying tale, he devoutly listened to the account of Kamalā in the hermitage. The Ekādaśī is most auspicious, and gives pleasures and salvation. Having duly heard about this Kamalā day—that the Ekādaśī is most auspicious and gives pleasures and salvation, Jayaśarman at that time observed the vow with them in the lonely temple. When it was night, Lakṣmī came there. (She said:) "O brāhmaṇa, due to the power of Kamalā I (shall) grant you a boon."

Jayaśarman said:

19-20. O beautiful one, who are you? To whom do you belong? How are you pleased with me? Are you Indrāṇī (the wife) of the lord of gods, or Bhavānī (the wife) of Śaṅkara? Or (are you) a female gandharva, a female kinnara or the spouse of either the Moon or the Sun? O you of a beautiful face, I have neither seen nor heard about the like of you.

Lakṣmī said:

21-24a. Now I am pleased. Being urged by the god of gods due to the efficacy of (the vow of) Kamalā, I have come from Vaikuṇṭha. At Prayāga, near the sages, you have observed the vow of that (Ekādaśī) which would fall in the bright half of the Puruṣottama month. O best brāhmaṇa, there is no doubt that by the power of this vow in your family will be born (those) men (who) will, through my favour, obtain (good position). I have told the truth.

The brāhmaṇa said:

24b-25a. O Lakṣmī, if you are pleased, then explain the vow in detail, which those brāhmaṇas that are good introduce in tales.

Lakṣmī said:

25b-30a. This is the best (account) for the listeners to listen. It is the most holy. It is auspicious and removes bad dreams.

Therefore, it should be carefully heard. The best man who reads devotedly a verse or half a verse, is instantly freed from crores of great sins. As Garuḍa is among the birds, this is the best among months. This Dvādaśī day is among the days as the Gaṅgā is among the rivers. Even now all the gods desiring to be born in Bhārata, duly worship that Nārāyaṇa Anāmaya. The groups of deities like Brahmā always worship those who devoutly worship the lord, god Viṣṇu.

30b-43. Those who are engrossed in (muttering Viṣṇu's) names, so also those who are engaged in the narration (of the virtues of Viṣṇu), so also those who are intent upon worshipping Viṣṇu are fortunate in the Kali age. There would be the couple of Ekādaśīs: (the one) in the bright half, (the other) in the dark half. The householders should observe (a fast on) the former, and for the ascetics the latter is prescribed. (The three days—) Ekādaśī, Dvādaśī and Trayodaśī partly in the night (after Dvādaśī, are auspicious). If the fast is broken on Trayodaśī, the religious merit is that of a hundred sacrifices. "O Puṇḍarīka, fasting on the Ekādaśī day, I shall eat on the next day. O Acyuta, be my refuge." Uttering this hymn of (i.e. sacred to) the god of gods, the Disc-holder, he, with his mind pleased, should devoutly observe a fast. The restrained observer of the vow should keep awake in front of the deity with songs, musical instruments, dances and Purāṇa-recitals. Then the observer of the vow, having got up (early) in the morning, having bathed and with his senses controlled should duly worship Viṣṇu. By bathing (the image of) Viṣṇu with pañcāmṛta[1] on Ekādaśī, and with water on Dvādaśī, a man gets assimilation into Viṣṇu. O Keśava, favour me, and be (well-)disposed through this vow to me who am blinded by the darkness of ignorance, and give me the sight of knowledge. Having thus prayed to the lord of the god of gods, the Mace-holder, he should devoutly feed brāhmaṇas and give them gifts. Then, controlled in speech and solely devoted to Viṣṇu, he should offer the five great sacrifices[2] and eat along with his relatives. He who, being controlled,

1. Pañcāmṛta: A collection of five sweet things, viz., milk, sugar, ghī, curd and honey used in worshipping a deity.

2. Mahāyajña: See Manu. 69.71. They are: the sacrifices offered to Brahma, deities, manes, human beings and beings.

observes in this way the auspicious Ekādaśī-vow goes to Viṣṇu's abode, return from which is difficult.

Speaking thus, and granting him a boon, Lakṣmī disappeared. The brāhmaṇa too, being rich came to his father's house.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

O king, he who would in this way observe the excellent vow of the Kamalā (Ekādaśī), and would listen to (Viṣṇu's account) on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu is freed from all sins.

CHAPTER SIXTYTHREE

Kāmadā Ekādaśī

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1-9. O lord of the world, I have heard about vows having many virtues. But, O Janārdana, I have heard nothing like the Ekādaśī(-vow). Again tell about the Ekādaśī(-vow) which destroys sins and gives religious merit and observing which a man would obtain the highest position in the world.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

O lord of the world, whether the Ekādaśī would be in the bright or the dark fortnight, it is not to be omitted, as it (gives) salvation and enhances happiness. O king, in the Kali-age, Ekādaśī frees a man from the bonds of the mundane existence, gives all desired objects, and destroys all sins on the earth. O best king, the Ekādaśī (falling) on a Sunday or a Tuesday or on the day of the passage of the Sun or a Planet through a Zodiacal sign should always be fasted on. It increases (the number of) sons and grandsons. Those to whom Viṣṇu is dear, should never give up the Ekadāśī-vow. It always gives a (long) life, fame, progeny and health. The Ekādaśī-vow always gives salvation, (handsome) form, kingdom. O king, those men who, endowed with great faith, observe it in the manner as is laid down, are of the form of Viṣṇu. O king, undoubtedly they are seen to be liberated while living.

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

O Kṛṣṇa, how is it that those who are seen to be of the form of sin (i.e. who are sinners), are liberated while living, and are of the nature of Viṣṇu? I have a great curiosity.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

10-22. O king, how are they who in the Kali-age observe devoutly and according to the acts as are laid down in the sacred texts, the excellent Ekādaśī-vow without (drinking) water, not of the form of Viṣṇu or not liberated while living? There is no other auspicious vow like that of Ekādaśī which removes all sins and gives all desired objects to men. Having eaten once only on the Daśamī day, and observed the vow without drinking water on the Nandā (Ekādaśī day) and having broken the fast on the Bhadrā (day), men become similar to Viṣṇu. A faithful man who observes the auspicious vow of the Kāmadā (Ekādaśī) obtains his desired (objects) in this and in the next world. This (vow) is pure, purifying, and destroys great sins. O best king, this one gives pleasures and salvation to those who observe it. A man should duly worship Viṣṇu on Kāmadā with flowers, incense etc., so also with offerings of food. A devotee of Viṣṇu, who observes the vow, should avoid these ten (articles) on Daśamī: bell-metal, flesh, beans, grams, kodrava, vegetables, honey, food offered by others, eating food and sexual union. On the Ekādaśī day he should avoid gambling, sport, sleep, tāmbūla, brushing his teeth, censuring others, wickedness, harming (others) and sex, (so also he should avoid) anger, false words on the Ekādaśī day. On the Dvādaśī day he should avoid bell-metal, flesh, beans, oil, false speech, exertion, journey, food and sexual union, (mounting upon) a bull's back, others' food, and vegetables. O king, those who have observed the Kāmadā (Ekādaśī) in this manner, and having after keeping awake at night, worshipped Viṣṇu, are freed from all sins and go to the best position. O king, by reciting (about) or listening to this vow (a man) would obtain the fruit of (having given) a thousand cows.

CHAPTER SIXTYFOUR

The Importance of Cāturmāsya

Nārada said:

1-2. O great god, I desire to hear about the restraints to be observed during the four months that are well-known on the earth. (Please) tell them. O lord, tell me what should be done during the four months (from the Ekādaśī in the bright half of Āṣāḍha to the Ekādaśī in the bright half of Kārtika) when Viṣṇu, Janārdana has gone to sleep? (Tell me) the fruit (obtained) on giving up the six flavours and keeping (i.e. not cutting) hair and nails, and (the fruit obtained) through other restraints.

Sūta said:

3-7. Hearing these words, the god with his eyes dilated, laughed, and said to Nārada, the best brāhmaṇa and treasure of penance:

Mahādeva said:

Now, O divine sage, listen. I am telling in detail. A man should observe a fast on the Ekādaśī in the bright half of Āṣāḍha. He should devoutly observe the Cāturmāsya-vows. When Viṣṇu is asleep, the wan should lie on the bare ground and should pass the four months till Kārtikī (Ekādaśī) would come. No installation (of an image) or rites like sacrifices take place. So also marriages, thread ceremonies, other auspicious ceremonies, royal journeys and processions do not take place (in Cāturmāsya).

8-15. Listen to the fruit of the vow of him (i.e. that he gets) who would observe vows (and practise) rites when the Garuḍa-bannered, Acyuta, Jagannātha is asleep. A man would obtain that fruit by observing the vows in Cāturmāsya which he would obtain by means of thousands of horse-sacrifices. He should make Viṣṇu sleep when the Sun is in Gemini; and should awaken Viṣṇu, when the Sun is in Libra. When the intercalary month comes, the order of the rite is like this: He should install Viṣṇu's image holding a conch, a disc, and a mace. O

Nārada, he should place the auspicious (image) wearing a yellow garment on a bed covered with a white (piece of) cloth and a pillow. And the Viṣṇu devotee, knowing (accounts in) history and Purāṇas, should bathe it with curd, milk, honey, fried grains and ghee. O brāhmaṇa, he should smear it with auspicious sandal, incense and lovely flowers, and should worship it with white flowers with (the accompaniment of) this sacred prayer: "O Jagannātha, when you are asleep, this world would be asleep. When you are awake, the world with the mobile and the immobile would be awake."

16-29. Thus (i.e. with this prayer), O Nārada, having installed that image of Viṣṇu, he should, in front of it, take up the vow: The person (taking up the vow) may be a male or a female devotee of him, according to the division between righteousness and unrighteousness. For four months, till the awakening of the god, he should take up these restraints preceded by brushing the teeth. Then he should observe a fast. When it is the bright morning, he, having conquered his self, should do his daily acts. I shall separately tell the fruits of the doers of the acts: A man, by avoiding jaggery, would secure sweetness. A man would obtain a long(-lived) progeny by avoiding oil. O brāhmaṇa, a man becomes handsome-bodied by avoiding ghee. He would secure his enemy's destruction by avoiding bitter oil. He would secure matchless good fortune by avoiding fragrant oil. He who avoids enjoying flowers, would be a vidyādhara in heaven. A man who practises abstract meditation, would obtain Brahmā's position. He who would avoid the six flavours, viz. acrid, sour, sweet, saline, pungent, and astringent, would avoid deformity and a bad smell. By avoiding tāmbūla he becomes an enjoyer and has his throat red. By avoiding ghee he (secures) handsomeness and his body would always be glossy. O best brāhmaṇa, by giving up fruits he gets many sons. By eating from a palāśa-leaf he would be handsome and would get pleasures. One who illuminates would become bright and actually the lord of wealth. He who avoids curd and milk, obtains Goloka.[1] The order of him who observes the vow of silence, is never futile.

1. Goloka: 'Cow-world', a part of heaven, or (in later mythology) Kṛṣṇa's heaven.

By avoiding a dish of barley or rice boiled in milk he secures Indra's seat. He, abiding in religious practices and taking delight in them, would, after muttering the hundred-fold fruitful (prayer) 'Salutation to Nārāyaṇa', be the only lord of vidyādharas in heaven.

30-41. He who always enjoys the fruit of a bath in Gaṅgā by merely bathing at Puṣkara would be the lord of the earth. O wise one, he who would anoint and bathe Viṣṇu in his house would live for a kalpa in Vaikuṇṭha. There is no doubt about this. That man who goes round (the image) keeping it to his right, goes with (i.e. in) a divine aeroplane to which swans are yoked. He who sings and plays upon musical instruments would go to the world of gandharvas. O wise one, one who eats the five products of a cow, would obtain the fruit of the Cāndrāyaṇa(-vow). He who would amuse people every day with recitations from sacred texts, gets the form of Vyāsa before Viṣṇu, and then would obtain Viṣṇu's position. By worshipping (him with) the Tulasī-leaf he would go to Viṣṇu's city. Having done sprinkling, he would obtain the divine place of the celestial nymphs. By bathing with cold water in his house he would obtain a spotless, body. By avoiding a bath with hot water he would get the fruit of a bath at Puṣkara. A man who eats from leaves would obtain the fruit (of a bath) at Kurukṣetra. He who everyday sleeps on a slab of stone gets the merit due to (a bath at) Prayāga. By avoiding (drinking) water for three days he is not overcome by diseases. He who eats from copper vessels would obtain the fruit of (a bath at) Naimiṣa. Avoiding bell-metal he should use the remaining vessels. If no (other) vessels are available, he should use an earthen pot or vessels made by him of palāśa leaves or taken from others. The wise man who for one year keeps the sacred fire and the wise one who eats from the vessels—both these are said to be equal.

42-49. The eating from the vessels made of lotus-leaves is said to be equal to the Cāndrāyaṇa-vow. O brāhmaṇa, each of the meals taken from the lotus-leaves is said to to equal to (the vow of) three nights. The fruit which is said (to accrue) from the Ekādaśī-fast is (the same as) the fruit of giving everything. He would get the fruit of (visiting) all holy places. He would not see hell on eating from lotus-leaves. A brāhmaṇa goes to

Vaikuṇṭha. The others would obtain heaven. This great divine tree is sin-destroying and gives all desired objects. O best king, a śūdra should avoid the (use of) the middle leaf. If he eats from that he would get (i.e. live in) hell for a period of fourteen Indras. He should avoid the middle leaf and eat from others. O brāhmaṇa, that śūdra who eats his meal from the middle leaf, would be purified by giving a tawny cow to a brāhmaṇa, not otherwise. A śūdra who would get a cow milked in his house, and would drink (that milk), would be born as an insect in the feces (and remain like that) for ten thousand years. And being freed from the insect-stock, he would get the beast-stock (i.e. will be born as a beast).

50-63. That man (belonging to the) śūdra (caste), who would drive a tawny bull, is, O Nārada, roasted in the Kumbhīpāka (hell) for as many years as are the hair (on his body). There is no doubt about it. If especially the śūdra has a shegoat in his house, he, drinking her milk goes to Raurava (hell). That śūdra who deals with a brāhmaṇa, is said to be belonging to a noble family, and the brāhmaṇa would be cast out (of the fold of) the Vedas. A brāhmaṇa who, prompted to doing trade, obeys a śūdra, becomes the resident of hell for as many years as he walks the steps. If a brāhmaṇa is sent by a śūdra for getting water to his house, he would go to hell by drinking that water which is like liquor. A śūdra should always give gifts to a brāhmaṇa. He should especially be devoted to him (i.e. a brāhmaṇa). Enjoying pleasures here, he goes to the next world. This (world) fashioned with the five elements is said to be useless. Therefore, he should give (gifts) to his preceptor. By that he would obtain inexhaustible fruit. O best brāhmaṇa, in this fearful Kali-age, full of sinful conduct, the wicked ones censure men of meritorious deeds. Due to censure (of others) a man becomes unhappy till the universal deluge. O wise one, there are many practices in the Kali-age. The religious practice giving merit, fulfilling desires and giving salvation is rare. A man who sleeps on the bare ground on the earth, is not troubled by diseases for ten thousand years. The man endowed with many sons and wealth, becomes free from leprosy. A man who eats (only) at night, would obtain the fruit of a pilgrimage. Without asking he gets the fruit of constructing wells and tanks. So also he who,

averse to taking (someone's) life, would avoid treachery. It is told in the Vedas that non-violence is a great virtue.

64-80. I have heard that everywhere giving gifts, kindness and restraint (are great virtues). Therefore, even by the great these should be done with a great effort. He who gives his body, sons and grandsons to his preceptor, would by the efficacy of the gift, become dear to Viṣṇu. He who is initiated by a śūdra, and the śūdra who initiates him—both are said to be sinners till the universal deluge. That most sinful śūdra who would advise harm, drops twentyone (members of) his family into hell. O brāhmaṇa, in the Kali-age many śūdras who are heretics are seen. Even for conversing with them hell is (visited by a man). By merely seeing the śūdras who are engaged in (getting) sacred knowledge and who mutter the Gāyatrī (hymn), (the sin of) the murder of a brāhmaṇa comes (to him who sees them). The brāhmaṇas having (marks of) conches and discs and accepted in the Vaiṣṇava sects, and always engaged in duties enjoined by the Vedas, purify (even) the respectable brāhmaṇas. This should always be done in the Cāturmāsya. What is the use of telling others things again and again, O brāhmaṇa? Those men who are Viṣṇu's devotees are blessed on the earth. Their family is most blessed, and their caste is said to be most blessed. The sin of him who would eat honey when Viṣṇu is asleep, would be great. Listen to what happens on avoiding it. He would obtain that fruit which he would get by all various sacrifices. He should avoid pomegranates, citrons and coconuts. Becoming a deity and moving in an aeroplane, he would go to Viṣṇu's position. The fortunate one, being rich, is born in an affluent family. That man who would pass the four months by eating once only, is honoured in Viṣṇu's world for as many thousand years as the muhūrtas after the sun have passed. That man who would avoid rice, barley and wheat (in the Cāturmāsya), would get that fruit which is declared by the sages to be the fruit of a horse-sacrifice duly performed with gifts. He possesses wealth and grains and has many sons. The fruit of offering with Tulasī(-leaves), sesamum-seeds and darbhas, is especially crore-fold in Cāturmāsya, when he would do it with the three articles (like Tulasī-leaves) when Viṣṇu is asleep.

81-94. They too rejoice near Viṣṇu for crores of yugas. Those who sing a line or half a line, half a ṛk or ṛks in front of Viṣṇu, are undoubtedly released. He who avoids sexual union when god (Viṣṇu is asleep, i.e. during the Cāturmāsya) is honoured in Viṣṇu's world for the period of a Manu. By avoiding curd, milk, so also butter milk, jaggery and vegetables, a man gets release. There is no doubt about it. O sage, those men who, day after day, bathe (with water mixed) with āmalaka, obtain great religious merit, (for) the wise say that the dhātrī (i.e. āmalaka)-fruit destroys sins. (Dhātrī) was formerly created by Brahmā for the emancipation of the three worlds. He who practises sandhyā and silence for the four months, rejoices in Vaikuṇṭha for the periods of four Manus. A man who cooks for himself and eats the food (cooked by himself) for four months is honoured in Indra's world for ten thousand years. A man should resort to silence during the four months of the rainy season. He would go to Viṣṇu's world, and after that to Brahmā's (world). A man who observes silence while eating, never perishes. The demons observing silence while eating, went to heaven. A man would be impure (due to) food with (i.e containing) worms and insects. Such food should be known as equal to cow-flesh, O best brāhmaṇa. That food should be known to be impure. If a man eats that, that is said to be the food which is always dear to the demons. Formerly Brahmā was pleased. That magnanimous one gave it. (Men) having eaten silently, have undoubtedly gone to heaven. If a man eats food while talking, then by that it would become impure. He just eats sin. Therefore, he should observe silence. O Nārada, eating silently should be known to be like (observing) a fast.

95-110. There is no doubt that the five (great) sins of him who, the best man, eats after giving the five oblations to the five breaths[1], are destroyed. O brāhmaṇa, a garment that has joints should be worn at the time of a rite (in honour of) the manes. That garment remaining on an impure body would be impure. A man who, with a garment put around his waist on his back, passes excrement or urinates, or has sexual union, should avoid that garment (while doing holy rites). O brāhmaṇa, the rite

1. Prāṇāhuti: Oblations offered to the five vital breaths, viz. Prāṇa, Apāna, Vyāna, Udāna and Samāna.

especially in honour of the manes should be avoided (when such a garment is put on). O sage, at all times the worship of god (Viṣṇu), the disc-holder, should especially be done by those who have controlled their senses. When Viṣṇu is asleep, grassy vegetables and safflower (should be avoided). So also garments having joints should be carefully avoided. He who avoids these in Cāturmāsya, when Viṣṇu is asleep, would not go to hell till the universal deluge. One should not (drink) liquor, should not eat flesh of a rabbit or a pig. That man also, on being engaged in harmlessness, when, especially in Cāturmāsya, god Viṣṇu is asleep, obtains godhead. O best brāhmaṇa, he who has given up uselessly getting angry or harsh, so also sexual union on the parvan days, would obtain the fruit of a horse-sacrifice. On celibacy (being observed) the progeny grows, so also life. He should avoid flowers, leaves, fruits, a couch, rubbing his body with unctuous substances and anointing (it), so also (taking) milk for no reason, flesh and liquor. Whatever is given up in Cāturmāsya when Viṣṇu is asleep, should first be given to a brāhmaṇa. There is no doubt about this. That wealth which is given to a brāhmaṇa, is, O wise one, inexhaustible. O brāhmaṇa, thereby he gets crorefold merit. There is no doubt about this. O best brāhmaṇa, with whatever vow Viṣṇu is worshipped, he gives Viṣṇu's abode. No doubt should be raised in this matter. He who, in the Cāturmāsya when Viṣṇu is asleep, does not have a vow, goes to hell, (and) his life has passed in vain. That man who everyday observes the excellent vow as told by a brāhmaṇa, so also the restraints that have been told, goes to the highest position. The gift given without the three things (viz. Tulasī, sesamum-seeds and darbhas) becomes useless.

111-112. Therefore, the best man, should according to his capacity and with all efforts please with vows and gifts Viṣṇu, the god of gods. All that gift (that is given) and that honouring of the brāhmaṇas done without bathing are useless till the regimes of fourteen Indras last.

Nārada said:

113. O lord, O master of the universe, tell me what kind of celibacy is that, having practised which human beings would pleased Viṣṇu.

Mahādeva said:

114-121. He who is devoted to his wife is said to be a celibate by the wise. O wise one, he who would forsake his wife, is inferior to a cāṇḍāla. Approaching the wife during her menses is said to be celibacy. The man who abandons his devoted, fault-less wife, is a sinner in the world, and would obtain the (sin of) causing an abortion. Thousands of horse-sacrifices and hundreds of Vājapeya sacrifices are not equal even to a sixteenth part of the Ekādaśī-fast. All (such things as) bathing, (giving) gifts, muttering (hymns), sacrifices, self-study and worship of deities done in the Cāturmāsya are inexhaustible. He who listens to the Purāṇa one time or two times, gets free from all sins and goes to Viṣṇu's world. O best brāhmaṇa, he who, when Viṣṇu is asleep, recites or mutters his name, gets a crorefold fruit of it. A brāhmaṇa devoted to Viṣṇu, who worships (Viṣṇu), he alone, the soul of the entire religion, is worthy of respect. There is no doubt. On hearing this auspicious, pure, sin-destroying (account of) Cāturmāsya, a man obtains religious merit, and would obtain the fruit of a bath in Gaṅgā.

CHAPTER SIXTYFIVE

Cāturmāsya Vow to be Concluded Properly

Nārada said:

1. O lord, tell me about bringing to the conclusion the vows in the Cāturmāsya. (For) when the vows are (properly) conclud-ed, everything certainly becomes complete.

Mahādeva said:

2-20. If, O magnanimous one, he who observes a vow, does not bring it to the (proper) conclusion, then he would not get the proper fruit. He, having had a deficiency in the vow becomes a leper or blind. For this reason, (a man) should bring the vow to (proper) conclusion. Having accepted these vows and

observed them duly, he should go to a brāhmaṇa after Viṣṇu who had slept, gets up. He should, duly and in detail, apologise to the god of gods. If he had avoided (the use of) oil during the Cāturmāsya, he should give ghee (to a brāhmaṇa); and if he had avoided (using) ghee (during the Cāturmāsya) he should offer milk (to a brāhmaṇa). After observing silence he should give sesamum-seeds to a brāhmaṇa. If (he had avoided) meal (in the Cāturmāsya) he should offer a meal rich in curd and rice to a brāhmaṇa. He should especially give food along with gold. O best sage, by giving food (to a brāhmaṇa) he is honoured in the world of Viṣṇu. The man who eats from the pot (i.e. plate) made from palāśa(-leaves) for the four months, should give (to a brāhmaṇa) a pot full of ghee, O brāhmaṇa. When he has eaten only at night (during the four months), he should give a meal with the six flavours to a brāhmaṇa. He should give a bull with gold to a brāhmaṇa who does not ask for it. He who had abandoned beans should give (a brāhmaṇa) a cow with her calf, O best sage. On having bathed (with water mixed) with dhātrī, he should give gold of the weight of a māṣa. If he had observed the vow of (not eating) fruits, he should give fruits. For the vow of (not eating) grains, he should give grains. Or rice is said (to be given). Similarly for (his vow of) sleeping on the ground, he should give a cotton-bed with a pillow. O best brāhmaṇa, he who had observed celibacy during the Cāturmāsya, should devoutly give food to a brāhmaṇa couple with objects of pleasure, dakṣiṇā, with vegetables and salt. If a man has bathed every day without (having applied) oil (to his body), he should give ghee and barley. If he had observed the vow of (growing) his nails and hair, he should give a place. If he had avoided (the use of) sandals, he should give sandals. On having avoided flesh, a cow with a calf is said to be given. He who has offered a lamp every day, should offer a golden lamp. And he should give that lamp with ghee to a brāhmaṇa. For the vow of (avoiding) vegetables, and for that of (avoiding) beans, he should (respectively) give vegetables and gold weighing a māṣa to a brāhmaṇa, Viṣṇu's devotee, if he desires fulfilment of his vow. For the vow of (avoiding) sexual unions he should give silver to a brāhmaṇa; and for that of nāgavallī (i.e. a tāmbūla), (he should give) camphor along with gold. O best brāhmaṇa, that which is from

time to time done for the vow should especially be given with a desire to go to heaven to a brāhmaṇa. Having first bathed, he should observe the vows before Viṣṇu. The god, holding a conch, a disc and a mace is without a beginning and an end. Who do not observe (a vow) before him, since Viṣṇu destroys sins?

CHAPTER SIXTYSIX

Propitiation of Yama

Nārada said:

1-4. O best god, for my well-being, tell me about the propitiation of Yama. O god, how (i.e. by doing what) a man does not go to hell? It is heard that in Yama's world there is the river Vaitaraṇī. She is unapproachable, boundless, difficult to be crossed, and contains much blood. How can she, difficult to be crossed by all beings, be easily crossed? O lord, this is just the great fear about Yama's world? O revered one, having favoured me, tell me the entire act to be free from that (fear).

Mahādeva said:

5-6. O brāhmaṇa, formerly I had bathed in the salty ocean at Dvārāvatī. O brāhmaṇa, I (there) saw a sage named Mudgala who came there. He was blazing like the sun. His body was shining with penance. Having saluted me, the sage Mudgala, being amazed, said:

Mudgala said:

7-21. O god, suddenly I fainted and fell on the ground. My limbs are burning. I am seized by Yama's servants. I, this soul of the size of the thumb, was dragged forcibly, was bound tightly by Yama's soldiers and taken near Yama. In a moment I saw in the assembly Yama of tawny eyes, of a dark face, very fierce, and possessing hundreds of fatal diseases, and waited upon in person by (the three humours in the human body viz.) wind, bile, phlegm—the (three) deficiencies—so also by

diseases like fever parching up the body, by boils and cuts etc. (He was also served by) crushing of the body with burning (sensation), head-ache, by fistula in the anus, (all) destroying the strength; by inflammation of the glands of the neck, eye-diseases, strangury, fever and sores. (He was also waited upon) by (diseases like) swooning, throat-disease, heat-disease, by goblins and thieves. Thus he was (served) by many that were fierce, terrible and of various forms. (He was served) by fiends, demons having skulls and heads in their hands in the battle as well as in hell, who were fierce and who were seated and who stood before him. (He was waited upon) by superintendents of religious affairs, so also by scribes like Citragupta, by tigers, lions and pigs, so also by serpents with locks of hair on their hoods and very difficult to catch. (He was waited upon by) scorpions, fanged beings, insects like bugs, wolves and dogs like (i.e. in the form of) spotted leprosy, herons, vultures and jackals. (So also he was waited upon) by thieves, poor beings, plagues, by female and male imps with their hair loose, and by asthmas with knitted eye-brows and crooked faces. They were of a mighty valour, were not timid, and punished the sinners. Yama, being waited upon by his attendants, shone in the assembly, as the Vyālāñjana mountain shines with fearful wild animals. Then Yama, the lord of all, said to his servants: "How have you, being confused about the name, brought this sage insted of Bhīmaka's son named Mudgala, (living) in the village of Kauṇḍinya? The life of that kṣatriya has come to an end. He should be brought. Free this one." Hearing this they went from him and again came (back to him). All those servants of Yama again said to Dharmarāja (i.e. Yama). "We who had gone there, did not see a man whose life had come to an end. O Sun's son, we, with our minds somehow confused, do not know (what to do)."

Yama said:

22-23. Generally those men who have observed the auspicious Dvādaśī and are told about the Vaitaraṇā river, are invisible to you, (my) servants. So also they who die at Ujjayinī, Prayāga, or in Yamunā, or who have offered sesamum-seeds, an elephant or gold, or cows, and (have performed) daily rites.

The messengers (i.e. the servants) said:

24-26. O brāhmaṇa, tell us fully what kind of vow it is. O god, what should be done in that vow which would please you? O best man, how is he who has observed the Dvādaśī(-vow) of the dark half and observed a fast, freed from a sin? Tell (us), in what manner the vow is to be observed. O treasure of pity, be pleased, show compassion, and tell (about it).

Śrī Mudgala said:

27. Hearing the words of the messengers, he spoke sweetly: "O messengers, I (shall) tell (you) as I have observed and seen (it)."

Yama said:

28-43. On these foremost (Dvādaśīs) falling in the dark half of the month of Mārgaśīrṣa, the Vaitaraṇī-vow should be duly observed, O messengers. Till the year ends, this should be certainly duly observed. Having done it, O messengers, (a man) is undoubtedly freed. The vow of a fast, pleasing Viṣṇu, should be observed. 'O great god of gods, today will be my fast.' He should, on the Dvādaśī day, devoutly worship Viṣṇu; and should pray to him, 'All that (sin) of mine, committed due to the defect of my indolent senses should be pardoned by favouring me.' Having made such a restraint, he should go to a holy place in the mid-day. Taking with him clay, cowdung, sesamum-seeds, he should duly go there. For the fulfilment of the vow he should bathe there. He should bath particularly with (the accompaniment of) the hymn *Aśvakrānte*. 'O earth, you who are trampled by horses and chariots and by Viṣṇu, remove my sin accumulated by me formerly.' When she removes the sin, he is freed from all sins. The sesamum-seeds, of the form of Viṣṇu, have sprung up in Kāśī. By means of the bath with sesamum, Viṣṇu removes all sins. 'O goddess, you are born from Viṣṇu's body. You remove great sins. You remove all sins of all. Salutation to you.' All the meritorious ones have said that bath, with the utterance of Viṣṇu's names, and by holding Tulasī-leaf, should be duly taken. Having bathed like this, and having come out, and having put on good garments, he should gratify his manes, and then worship Viṣṇu. Then he should put a jar which

is scratchless, which contains leaves, which has five gems in it, and which is perfumed with divine fragrances, which is full of water, which contains coins, and which is accompanied by a copper-vessel. O king, a man should offer a great worship to god Viṣṇu, god of gods, treasure of penance residing in it, with the full rite. He should also get fashioned an auspicious circle with clay, cowdung, etc. Or he should get it fashioned with white, washed rice, and powders of stone. He should (also) get fashioned (an image of) Dharmarāja (i.e. Yama) having limbs like hands etc.

44-54. Then having placed before it, (the representation of) the reddish river Vaitaraṇī, he should separately but duly worship it with invocation. 'I am invoking Yama, lord of gods and of a universal form. O noble Viṣṇu, come here and give your proximity. O lord, Lakṣmī's dear husband, this is water for washing your feet. You who always are engaged in going out into the universe, show me favour.' (He should touch) the feet (of the image saying) 'Salutation to Bhutidā'. (He should touch) the knees (saying 'Salutation) to Aśoka.' (He should touch) the thighs (saying) 'Salutation to Śiva.' (He should touch) the waist (saying) 'O Viśvamūrti, salutation (to you).' (He should touch) the penis (saying) 'Salutation to Kandarpa.' (He should) in the same way (touch) the testicle (saying) 'Salutation to Āditya.' (He should touch) the belly (saying) 'Salutation to Dāmodara.' (He should touch) the breasts (saying) 'Salutation to Vāsudeva.' (He should touch) the face (saying) 'Salutation to Śrīdhara.' (He should touch) the hair (saying) 'Salutation to Keśava.' (He should touch) the back (saying) 'Salutation to Śārṅgadhara'. (He should touch) the feet (saying) 'Salutation to Varada'. (He should touch) the head, (uttering) his own name (and saying) 'Salutation to you, the soul of all, and having in your hands a conch, a disc, a sword, a mace and an axe.' Thus it is told. 'Salutation to you, Matsya, Kūrma, and Varāha, Narasiṁha and Vāmana, (Paraśu-)rāma, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Kalki. For the destruction of the streams of all sins, I am worshipping you. My repeated salutations to you.' Having by all means meditated upon Viṣṇu with these hymns, he should worship him. 'O Dharmarāja, I salute you. Salutation to you, O Dharmarāja. Salutation to you, O lord of the Southern

direction, O you, whose vehicle is a buffalo. O Citragupta, salutation to you. Salutation to Vicitra (i.e. the lovely one) for the cessation of suffering in hell. Give me my desired objects.'

55-77. He should always salute Yama, Dharmarāja, Mṛtyu, Antaka, Vaivasvata, Kāla, and Sarvabhūtakṣaya (destroyer of all beings). (He should always salute) Vṛkodara, Citra, Vicitra, Citragupta, Nīla, and Dadhna. Thus with these twelve names the lord Dharmarāṭ should be worshipped. 'O Vaitaraṇī, very difficult to be crossed, sin-destroyer, granting all desired objects, come here, O noble one. Accept the respectful offering made by me.' The well-known river Vaitaraṇī (flows) by the fierce gates of Yama. Beings going beyond birth, death and old age (bathe) in her for emancipation. She is difficult to cross for the sinners and removes the fears of all beings. In her, beings suffering from great pangs bathe through fear. 'O Jayādevī, desiring to cross that fierce one, I repeatedly salute you.' That is the Vaitaraṇī river in which the gods live. She too is devoutly worshipped for pleasing Viṣṇu. She, to whose bank sages and men come, and who removes sins, is also worshipped in the form of a river. I shall give you (a vow) to cross her in order to be free from all sins. For religious merit I shall tell you (about) the river Vaitaraṇā. 'You are devoutly worshipped by me and also for pleasing Viṣṇu. O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Jagannātha, emancipate me from the mundane existence. Merely by means of my uttering your name, remove all my sin. I have made a great sacred thread with nine strands. Accept it, O lord of gods, and being pleased, grant my desired (objects). This is the very charming tāmbūla for you, prepared according to my capacity. O lord of gods, accept it (and) emancipate me from the ocean of the worldly existence. This is the lamp with five wicks (offered to you) for being waved before you. O you the sun (removing) the darkness of illusion, be attached (to us) and remove (our) misery. I have offered you with devotion good food, well cooked food having all the (six) flavours. O lord, accept it. By means of the hymn of twelve letters (viz, *Om namo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya*), and the muttering done according to the number, may the lord of Śrī be pleased with me, and grant me my desired (object). When the great ocean was churned, five cows sprang up. Repeated salutations to the cow Nandā which is among them.' Having duly worshipped the cow, and being com-

posed, one should offer the respectful offering. 'O Nandinī, O you granter of all desires, O you goddess, removing all destructive (elements), always give me good health and a long (line of) progeny. O Kapilā, worshipped by the intelligent Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra, remove my sin accumulated in former (existences). May golden-horned milch-cows, like Surabhi, and those born from her, always remain, like rivers and oceans, in front of me, behind me. May they stand by me in heaven, O goddess, full of all gods, very auspicious, and loving your devotees.' Having thus worshipped he should offer the daily rite to the cow. 'May the daughters of Surabhi, pure, sin-destroying and beneficial to all, may the mothers of the three worlds accept the food offered by me. Salutation to Gaṅgadā, the auspicious one, for the destruction of all sins.'

78-85. With this hymn only the wise one should hold the mace. (Saying) 'Paṁ, salutation to Padmanābha', the very intelligent one should have the lotus. (He should say) 'Caṁ, salutation to the Cakrarūpin Viṣṇu'. Its having said to be due to the disc. 'Śaṁ, salutation to him of the form of the conch. Salutation to you, who bring about happiness.' O messengers, the having (the mark of) the conch said to be done with this hymn. The putting on (of the marks) of the four weapons is declared by the sages. This having the marks burnt (on the skin with red-hot iron on the body) for a brāhmaṇa is as obligatory as the maintenance of the sacred fire and the study of the Vedas. The brāhmaṇas who have mastered the Vedas should especially have (the marks made) by fragrant sandal or gopīcandana. By having (the marks) even a cāṇḍāla would be purified. Even if a cāṇḍāla, one who would have the vertical, soft, pleasing (sectarian) mark, would be purified, and is always respected by brāhmaṇas. When, in a house of cāṇḍālas a Tulasī (-plant) is seen, the Tulasī from there should be taken with a devoted heart.

CHAPTER SIXTYSEVEN

The Importance of Gopikācandana

Maheśvara said:

1-13. That best brāhmaṇa, having heard like this from the mouth of Yama told it to me and the independent sage went (his way). O best brāhmaṇa, that house where there is gopīkācandana is of the nature of a holy place. This has indeed been told by Viṣṇu. In the house of that brāhmaṇa where there is gopikācandana, grief and delusion do not stay. Nor is there any inauspicious (event). The ancestors of him (or them) are happy and his (or their) progeny grows in whose house gopikācandana is present day and night. The clay from Gopīpuṣkara is pure and purifies the body. By rubbing (one's body with it) physical and mental diseases that are there, perish. Therefore, it giving salvation and fulfilling desires is put on their bodies by men. The holy places and sacred places roar till that time, O brāhmaṇa, as long as gopikācandana is not seen or heard about. It should be meditated upon, it should be worshipped; it destroys dirt and sins. Merely with its touch a man becomes as pure as a god. It gives salvation and is highly purifying at the time of (one's) death. O best brāhmaṇa, what should I say? Gopīcandana gives salvation. A wise man should rub his body with the mixture of Tulaśī-wood of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, so also the clay at the root (of the tree) and gopikācandana and haricandana also. He who puts on a mark with the fluids (i.e. pastes) of gopikācandana has always visited all holy places in Jambū Dvīpa. Freed from all sins he goes to the highest position of Viṣṇu. He has also performed the Śrāddha after having gone to Gayā. So also the man who has put on (the mark with) gopīcandana, (even though) he is a drunkard, or has murdered a brāhmaṇa or a cow or a child, is freed that moment only due to having (the mark of) gopīcandana.

CHAPTER SIXTYEIGHT

The Greatness of Viṣṇu's Devotees

Maheśvara said:

1-9. O Nārada, listen, I shall tell (you) the characteristic(s) of the devotees of Viṣṇu, hearing which people are freed from such sins as the murder of a brāhmaṇa. O best sage, listen. Now I shall tell you of what kind their characteristics are and what their nature is. O best sage, listen. I shall describe to you a man of that kind. Since he belongs to Viṣṇu, he is called Vaiṣṇava. Of all the castes Vaiṣṇava is said to be the greatest. A Vaiṣṇava is (born) in the family of those whose food is excellent (i.e. who eat excellent food). O brāhmaṇa, by merely seeing them, in whom forgiveness, kindness, austerities and truth reside, sin perishes like cotton. He whose mind, free from doing harm, has settled upon Viṣṇu, (so also) he who would always put on (the marks of) a conch, a disc, a mace, a lotus, so also he who would put round his neck the rosary of Tulasī-wood, and would always put on the marks of twelve kinds, so also he who knows (the difference between) righteousness and unrighteousness is called a Vaiṣṇava. He is always engaged in (reciting) the Vedas and sacred texts and always performs sacrifices. So also the family of them is blessed, and glory is said to belong to them who repeatedly celebrate the twentyfour festivals.

10-20. In the world those devotees of Viṣṇu in whose family only (i.e. at least) one devotee of Viṣṇu is born, are most blessed. He has repeatedly emancipated that family, O brāhmaṇa. All the stocks like the oviparous, sprouting, viviparous beings should be known as having conches, discs and maces. By merely seeing him the killer of a brāhmaṇa is always purified. But, O divine sage, I shall tell you that more blessed than those are the Vaiṣṇavas seen on the earth, O great sage. Those knowing the truth should look upon them as equal to Viṣṇu. I have heard that they are undoubtedly most blessed in the world in the Kali age. He who has worshipped Viṣṇu, has worshipped all. He who has honoured Viṣṇu's devotees has given a large gift. Those who give fruits, leaves, vegetables, food or garments to Viṣṇu's devotees, are always blessed on the earth. Those who

have worshipped Viṣṇu's devotee, have worshipped all. Those who have worshipped Viṣṇu, are said to be most blessed. Merely by seeing them a man is absolved of sins. O brāhmaṇa, what is the use of telling other things repeatedly? Therefore, seeing and touching them gives joy. As is Viṣṇu so is this devotee (of him). There is no difference between them. O child, realising this, a wise man should always honour (a devotee of Viṣṇu). There is no doubt that he who feeds but one brāhmaṇa devotee of Viṣṇu, has fed a thousand brāhmaṇas.

CHAPTER SIXTYNINE

The Vow of Śravaṇa Dvādaśī

Nārada said:

1. O best god, the able ones always have fasts. O sinless one, tell me about one Dvādaśī (only) which is auspicious.

Śiva said:

2-10. The Dvādaśī in the bright half of Bhādrapada, along with the Śravaṇa (lunar mansion) gives everything, is auspicious, and (if) a fast (is observed on that day), it gives great fruit. Having bathed at the confluence of river(s) and fasted on Dvādaśī, a man obtains the fruit of Dvādaśī(-vow) without any effort. That Dvādaśī which is connected with (the rise of) Mercury and Śravaṇa (lunar mansion) is very great. Everything that is done on that (day) becomes inexhaustible. O Nārada, a man having bathed at the confluence of rivers when Dvādaśī is conjoined with Śravaṇa, would obtain the fruit of the gift of a cow. A wise man having placed a pitcher full of water, should put upon it a vessel, having installed (the image of) Viṣṇu in it. Then before it the wise one should offer eatables cooked in ghee. He should also devoutly give, according to his capacity, nine pitchers full of water. Having thus worshipped Viṣṇu, he should keep awake there. (Then) having got up in the spotless morning, and having worshipped Viṣṇu with flowers, incense, offerings of

eatables, fruits and very beautiful garments, he should offer him a handful of flowers and recite this hymn: 'Repeated salutations to you, O Viṣṇu, conjoined with Mercury and Śravaṇa. Destroying the stream of our sins, give us all pleasures.'

11-19. He should duly give pure food to a brāhmaṇa who has mastered the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas, and especially to him who knows the Purāṇas. With his mind concentrated, the best man should accomplish all this in this manner on the bank of a river. In this case also they narrate an old account which took place in this great forest. O brāhmaṇa, listen to it. Hearing it a man is freed from great grief. There was a country named Daśāraka, and to its west, O wise one, there was the Maru country, fierce due to all (kinds of) beings. The land there had the sand very much heated. There were also great serpents. (The land there) was full of trees with scanty shadow, and crowded with dead animals. (It was crowded with trees) like śamī, khadira, palāśa, karīra, and pīlu. There were fearful groups of trees full of strong thorns. It was full of men whose vitality was exhausted (i.e. who were very weak). Such region was at places seen there. Yet all beings bounded by karma lived (there). O wise one, there was neither water nor were there clouds, the receptacles of water. O brāhmaṇa, (there) best birds were seen dead, along with their thirsty young ones remaining between their wings.

20-34. Into that country—Marujāṅgala—like that, a merchant missing his caravan through (ill,) luck, entered. With his mind confused and oppressed with hunger, thirst and exhaustion, he did not know as to where a village was, where water was, or where he (himself) stood. Then he saw evil spirits with their senses overcome with hunger and thirst. They were large, wicked, fierce; were fleshless (i.e. very weak) and they were fearful to look at. He saw one (of them) looking ugly and mounted upon the shoulders of an evil spirit and surrounded by many evil spirits. It was not moving, was very fierce, and was accompanied by the sounds of evil spirits. The evil spirit also, having seen the man who had come to that fierce forest, got down from the evil spirit's shoulder and approached him. Having saluted the best merchant, it said these words: "How did you enter this very fearful region?" To it the intelligent merchant said: "I who

missed my caravan, (un-)fortunately entered this forest due to my former deeds. Thirst oppresses me, so also hunger oppresses me very much. My end has come. My words are faltering. I now do not see any remedy by means of which I would live." When this was said by him, the evil spirit said these words to the merchant: "Wait for a while after resorting to a blossomed śamī. Then being offered a hospitable reception by me you will go at will." Thus addressed, the merchant, oppressed by thirst, did like that. When it was the mid-day the evil spirit came to that region of the blossomed tree and brought down a beautiful pitcher of water, full of cold water, along with curd and rice and he himself offered it to the guest. Then merely by eating it, he was very much satisfied. And in a moment he became free from thirst and torment. Then the evil spirits came there. He gave a portion from the curd and rice (to all) one by one. The evil spirits were highly satisfied with the curd and rice along with water.

35-42a. Having gratified the guest and all the evil spirits, he himself ate at will, whatever was left of (what they had) eaten. When he was eating the good food and water were exhausted. Then the merchant said these words to the chief of the evil spirits: "This strikes me as a great wonder in this forest. Wherefrom did you secure the excellent food and drink? So also, how did you satisfy with just little food so many of these who are fleshless (i.e. weak) and have their sides broken? How is it that you have made your abode in this very fierce forest? Remove this doubt of me. I have a great curiosity (to know it)." Thus addressed by the merchant, the evil spirit spoke these words: "O sinless one, in my former birth, like me who was devoted to trade, there was no other wicked man in the entire city. Due to greed for wealth, I never gave alms to any one then. Then there was a virtuous brāhmaṇa friend of mine.

42b-54. On the twelfth day of Bhādrapada, when the Śravaṇa (a Zodiacal sign) appeared, he some time went with me to the Tāpī river to bathe. Her confluence with Candrabhāgā was holy. Candrabhāgā is the Moon's daughter, and Tāpī is the Sun's daughter. With the brāhmaṇa I got into the lukewarm water of them. Men fasted on the occasion of the Śrāvaṇa-dvādaśī, and gave pitcher of water full of the good Candrabhāgā

water to Brāhmaṇas. I also gave Viṣṇu's image, with curd and rice, with lids, with an umbrella, a pair of sandals, and a garment to principal brāhmaṇas, O very intelligent one. Then for the preservation of my wealth, I, on her bank, and in (keeping with my) vow, gave, after fasting, a charming pitcher of water. Having done that, I came home, and after some time, I expired, and due to my heresy I was reduced to the state of an evil spirit in this terrible forest like the family of snakes. On the occasion of Śravaṇa-dvādaśī, I gave a pitcher of water. The same is received by me at mid-day every day. All other brāhmaṇas who were sinful, who had sexual union with other's wives, and who had plotted against their masters, became evil spirits. Here, in this Maru region, the men were born as goblins and evil spirits; and they have become my friends here. The eternal highest soul, revered Viṣṇu is imperishable. That which is offered with reverence to him is said to be inexhaustible. Though they are repeatedly satisfied with inexhaustible food, they do not at all give up their state of evil spirits and weakness.

55-61. I, after having honoured with food a guest (like) you who have come (here), have become free from the state of an evil spirit, and will obtain the highest position (viz. salvation). But these, abandoned by me, will experience terrible suffering due to their acts in this very fearful forest. O noble one, with a desire to favour me, take down the names and their lineage which are (given by me). There is an auspicious box in your upper garment. Then reaching the Himālaya mountain, you will then obtain a treasure there. O very intelligent one, then go to Gayāśīrṣa, and perform a śrāddha." Having thus instructed the merchant as he liked, he dismissed him. He (too) being eager went away. Having reached his house first, he (then) later went to the Himālaya mountain. Then taking the treasure seen there he came (to Gayāśīrṣa). Taking one-sixth portion of it he went to Gayāśīrṣa.

62-75. The very intelligent one went to Gayā, performed a śrāddha, (so also) a śrāddha offered to the evil spirits duly and as indicated. Taking (i.e. uttering) the names and (mentioning) the families, he offered a piṇḍa to everyone. He whose śrāddha the merchant would perform by day, showed him his body in his dream and said: "O noble one, O sinless one, by your

favour I have abandoned the state of an evil spirit, and have reached the highest condition." In this way the noble-minded one having duly performed (the śrāddhas) at Gayāśīrṣa, later went, repeatedly meditating upon Viṣṇu, to his own house. The very intelligent one, in the bright fortnight of Bhādrapada when it was the occasion of Śravaṇa-dvādaśī, with all necessary things went to the confluence of the rivers. Having bathed at the confluence of the rivers, he observed the Dvādaśī fast. Then he bathed there, gave (gifts to brāhmaṇas) and worshipped Viṣṇu. Then he with a concentrated mind gave presents to a brāhmaṇa according to the manner specified in the sacred texts. Then the intelligent merchant returned. When every year the month of Bhādrapada arrived, on the occasion of Śravaṇa-dvādaśī (he bathed) at the confluence of rivers. Thus dedicating everything to Viṣṇu, he performed all (the rites). After a long time he died. He obtained a great position which is difficult to be obtained by men. Even now he being waited upon by Viṣṇu's servants, plays in Vaikuṇṭha. O brāhmaṇa, thus you observe the Dvādaśī-vow. It gives all good fortune in this world and the next. It produces good ideas, it is great, and removes all sins. He who, on the occasion of the Śravaṇa-dvādaśī observes such a vow, goes to Viṣṇu's world due to the efficacy of this vow.

CHAPTER SEVENTY

The Vow of Nadī-trirātra

Nārada said:

1. O lord of gods, O lord of the Universe, O you who give pleasures and salvation, O you greatest god, tell me (that) due to which (a man) does not experience grief.

Maheśa said:

2-10. Listen, O brāhmaṇa, I shall tell you the vow of the river observed for three nights, having observed which, men do

not go to hell. A man, having obtained (long) life, (good) health, matchless good fortune, happiness and wealth, so also inexhaustible (i.e. continuous) progeny, is honoured in heaven. When the month of Āṣāḍha comes the river is full of water. She is well-known in the Purāṇa to be constantly full of water. In the rainy season, when (the sky) is full of clouds, she should be (served) with a vow. When the river is full with all (kinds of) water, the vow intended for three nights should be carefully observed. As is liked by one*, one should see her for three days. On the bank of a water place, when the river is flooded (he should bathe); or should carry home that water in a black pitcher. O brāhmaṇa, a wise man, having gone to the river in the morning, should bathe there, if he is able to fast for three nights. If he is unable (to fast), he should fast by eating once a day. He should offer lamp regularly, and worship (Viṣṇu) in the morning and evening. Uttering the name of the great river and of Varuṇa, and placing (mentally) Viṣṇu, lying in water,

11-25. (he should say:) "Salutation to the deity, O Gaṅgā, O Gautamī; O river, O Sindhu, Kāverī, Sarasvatī, Salutation to you. Repeated salutations to Tāpī, Payoṣṇī, Pūrṇā, Mehendrasukhadā (delighting Indra), Kāśyapī, Gaṇḍakī and to river Sindhu. Salutation to (you), O Varuṇa, living in water and dear to Viṣṇu. O lord of the aquatic animals, O lord of water, always grant me well-being. Accept the respectful offering made by me. Give me the desired fruit." He should also make offering of food with pumpkin gourds, coconuts, and other auspicious fruits produced in the season. (He should say:) "Salutation to you, O Keśava, O Ananta. Salutation to you lying in water. O lord, protect me. O Govinda, grant me a boon." Thus he should, in proper order, and at proper time, worship (the deity). He being pure, and having observed the three-night vow, should break the fast after worshipping the deity and should use a vessel full of water, with fruits, flowers. O learned one, he should, along with women, children and men, with songs, musical instruments and pitchers full of river (water) and placing it at every watery place worship it with fruits and flowers.* So also with various kinds of grains and sprinklings of water. Having carefully come home laugh-

*The reading is obscure.

ing, singing and dancing, he should worship bamboo-baskets filled with seven (kinds of) grains. According to his capacity he should fill seven, five or three (baskets). Desiring his well-being, he should not drink river water for three nights. At the time of breaking the fast food to be eaten during certain holidays or days of fast should be procured. After bath is taken or worship is done the water of the river should not be used. Give pure food and eatables in three groups. So also (give) seven bamboo-baskets and seven water-pitchers also. He should eat food eaten on days of fast and without acrid or sweet taste. He should carefully avoid food with beans and ground with stone. O best brāhmaṇa, thus the vow should be observed for three years. When the three years are over, he should conclude it in this way:

26-32. O Nārada, he should give a (brāhmaṇa) couple a black cow, with a black (piece of) cloth and sesamum-seeds. Having thus given (these) to a (brāhmaṇa) couple he should also give gold (to the couple) according to his capacity. O Nārada, he should fashion golden image of Varuṇa, as the form of a river, and a fully auspicious circle (in honour) of Varuṇa. He should place there a pitcher along with presents. Having worshipped it that is placed there, he should duly and devoutly worship it and then give it to a brāhmaṇa. He should in accordance with his wealth and capacity feed the brāhmaṇas, so also his preceptor who is of respectable character and who is engaged in (the study of) all sacred texts. When this is done, the vow would be complete, O learned one. He would have unending good fortune, happiness, wealth and children. He never meets with a calamity, and is, for a long time, honoured in heaven. This (vow) was observed by wives of gods and of sages also. Formerly, the nāga-women and siddha-women had observed this vow. This vow of the Nadī-trirātra is matchless. What else do you wish to hear? He certainly always obtains good fortune and children.

CHAPTER SEVENTYONE

Viṣṇu's One Thousand Names

The sages said:

1-2. O Sūta, O good one, live long. You, of a kind heart, have told us the wonderful dialogue which took place between Nārada and Śiva.O preceptor, tell us who are listening devoutly, how the noble Nārada heard the importance of the lord's names.

Sūta said:

3-5. O best brāhmaṇas, all you sages, listen. I am telling an old account, having heard which devotion to Kṛṣṇa enhances. Once Nārada, quite calm, went to see his father to the peak of (the mountain) Meru which was resorted to by siddhas and cāraṇas. O brāhmaṇas, Nārada, the best sage, having saluted Brahmā, the lord of the worlds, who was seated there, said to him:

Nārada said:

6-8. O lord of the universe, O master, tell me how much power there is in the name of him, and of what kind is the greatness of the name of the noble one, who, the lord of the universe, is actually Nārayaṇa Hari, the highest soul, Hṛṣīkeśa, united with all beings. All foolish men, being deluded by illusion, do not at all know lord Viṣṇu in this Kali age which is worthless.

Brahmā said:

9-22. O child, please listen, how in this Kali age worship is especially to be done by reciting (his) names. The recollection of Viṣṇu, the conqueror, with an effort, is seen to purify untold sins, and it destroys sins. Knowing everything (else) to be false, a man who recites and mutters Viṣṇu's names, is freed from all sins, and goes to Viṣṇu's highest position. There is no doubt that those men who always utter the two letters *Ha-ri* become free just by uttering them. All expiations consist in remembering Kṛṣṇa repeatedly. A man who

remembers Kṛṣṇa in the morning, at night and at mid-day, etc. instantly reaches Nārāyaṇa, the destroyer of sins. When just by remembering Viṣṇu all the suffering perishes, he attains salvation; he obtains heaven due to his reciting Viṣṇu's name. A man should know that it is an eternal (state for him) whose mind is (engaged) in muttering his names, sacrifices and (his) worship, and the state continues for (the periods of) fourteen Indras. What a great disparity is there between going to heaven which is characterised by returning (i.e. by rebirth), and muttering the names of Viṣṇu, the excellent seed (i.e. source) of salvation? That mouth is a great holy place where Prācī Sarasvatī filling the eddy (as it were) with the words *Namo Nārāyaṇāya* (salutation to Nārāyaṇa) appears. Therefore, the best man, by remembering Viṣṇu day and night, and with his sins in the Kali age destroyed, does not go to hell. O you of the best vow, I have told (you) the truth and the truth (only). Merely by uttering (Viṣṇu's) name a man is free from a great sin. There is no doubt that even that cāṇḍāla who mutters 'Rāma, Rāma, Rāma' has his mind purified. Or he who mutters and recites 'Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa', has merely by the utterance of that name, visited all holy places like Kurukṣetra, Kāśī, Gayā and Dvārikā.

23-29a. O brāhmaṇa, he who always mutters or recites 'Nṛsiṁha' with joy, abandons this world and rejoices near Viṣṇu. A devotee of Viṣṇu is freed from a great sin in the Kali age. A man obtains by repeating the names of Viṣṇu in the Kali age, what he obtains by meditation in the Kṛta age, by performing sacrifices in the Tretā age, and by worshipping Viṣṇu in the Dvāpara age. Realising this men are plunged into Viṣṇu, the soul of the world. With all their sins destroyed they go to the highest position of Viṣṇu. Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Nṛsiṁha, Vāmana, so also (Paraśu-)rāma, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, and after him is said to be (the incarnation of) Kalki. These ten are said to be (Viṣṇu's) ten incarnations on the earth. Merely by (uttering) their names, (even) the killer of a brāhmaṇa is always purified. He, by reciting, muttering, meditating upon Viṣṇu's name in any manner, is freed. There is no doubt that he would be Viṣṇu himself.

Sūta said:

29b-36a. Hearing this Nārada was greatly amazed. He then said to his father: "O best god, why is it said: 'There are thousands of gods; there are thousands of Rudras. There are hundreds of manes, so also yakṣas and kinnaras. So also goblins, evil spirits, fiends, and those that belong to the species of deities. The greatness of their name is not heard or seen, as I have heard about the greatness of Viṣṇu's name. There is no doubt that merely by uttering his name, one is freed.' O god, what is the use of visiting the holy places or wandering over the earth? By (merely) hearing the greatness of his names, one would obtain salvation. That mouth is a great holy place, that mouth is a sacred place, in which the words 'Rāma Rāma' are (found). That mouth fulfils all desires. O you of a good vow, which are the names of him (i.e. of Viṣṇu) that should be recited? O grandsire, tell me all that in detail."

Brahmā said:

36b-44. This Viṣṇu always pervades (everything), is the ancient, highest soul. He has no beginning or end. He is glorious, the soul of beings, the creator of beings. May this Viṣṇu, from whom I am born, always protect (you). This one is the death of death. He is my ancestor. He is imperishable, has lotus-like eyes, and is an intelligent, immutable (great) person. Viṣṇu always lies on Śeṣa. He has a thousand heads. He is a great lord. He occupies all beings and he, Viṣṇu, is actually of the form of the universe. This Viṣṇu is the enemy of Kaiṭabha, is the creator; (this) god is the lord of the world. O best man, I do not know his name, and (about) his family (also). O dear one, though I am the propounder of the Vedas, I never know (this). Therefore, O divine sage, go there where the lord of the universe is. O best sage, he will tell you the entire truth. He, the lord of Kailāsa, is alone the ever-prosperous person. He is the best among all the devotees of Viṣṇu. He is greater than the great. (This) lord of Umā has five faces, and he destroys all miseries. He is the lord of the universe; he is the master of everything; he always loves his devotees. O best among the gods, go there; (that best god) will tell you everything.

45-55. Hearing the words of his father, Nārada proceeded to go there, to the abode (of Śiva) on Kailāṣa, where that god, the granter of well-being, always stays, to learn the importance of Viṣṇu's names. There Nārada saw the god honoured by deities, seated on the peak of Kailāsa, the god of gods, the preceptor of the world, having five faces, ten arms, and having the trident in his hand, having a skull, having a staff with a skull at the top,[1] holding a sharp spear and a sword, holding the trident, fearful, granting boons, and having the bull (i.e. Nandin) as his vehicle, with his body (smeared) with ash, having charm due to serpents, and having the (crescent-)moon on his head, resembling a dark cloud, and having the lustre of a crore of suns, and sporting there. (Prostrating himself) like a staff he (i.e. Nārada) saluted the lord of gods. Seeing him, the great god, the best among the devotees of Viṣṇu, and with his eyes dilated due to amazement, said to the best brāhmaṇa (i.e. Nārada): "O best among divine sages, why have you come here?"

Nārada said:

O god, some time I had approached Brahmā. There I heard about the excellent greatness of Viṣṇu. It was told there to me by Brahmā, O best of gods. I heard from Brahmā's mouth how much the power of the names of him (i.e. Viṣṇu) is. Then I first asked about the thousand names of Viṣṇu. Then Brahmā said to me: "O Nārada, I do not know (them). This great Rudra knows (them). He will tell you all." Being very much amazed, I have come to you.

56-67a. In this terrible Kali age men are short-lived. They are engaged in impious acts. And they do not have faith in (Viṣṇu's) name. Similarly brāhmaṇas are heretics and always engrossed in impious acts. They are void of (i.e. do not perform) the Sandhyā (prayer), have fallen from vows, are wicked, and of dirty figures. As are the brāhmaṇas, so are also the kṣatriyas and so also vaiśyas. So also are śūdras and others, but not Viṣṇu's devotees. O lord, the śūdras are out of the fold of the twice-born in the Kali age. They do not know what is righteous, what is unrighteous, and what is beneficial and what is not.

1. Khaṭvāṅga – A club or staff with a skull at the top considered as the weapon of Śiva and carried by ascetics and yogins.

Realising this, O master, I have approached you. And I have also heard the importance of (Viṣṇu's) names from Brahmā's mouth. You are the god of all gods, and are always my lord. You are the enemy of Tripura, the universal soul and the creator, again and again. Favour me, and narrate the thousand names of Viṣṇu, which produces good fortune of men, and always produces great devotion in them. It gives Brahman (the Supreme Spirit or the Vedas) to the brāhmaṇas. It gives victory to the kṣatriyas. It gives wealth to vaiśyas and always gives happiness to śūdras. O Maheśvara, I desire to hear it from you. Among all the devotees of Keśava (i.e. Viṣṇu) you are the (most) capable. O you of a good vow, favour me, and tell it to me if it is not a secret. It is very pure. It is always full of all holy places. Therefore, I desire to hear it. O lord, O master of the universe, (please) tell it.

Hearing the words of Nārada, (Śiva) had his eyes dilated with wonder. He was horripilated while recollecting Viṣṇu's names.

The lord said:

67b-68. These thousand names of Viṣṇu are to be kept secret. Hearing these, O child, a man would never have a miserable position. Sometime in the past Pārvatī said to me:

Pārvatī said:

69-71. O lord of Kailāsa, O lord of gods, O you who are endowed with great prosperity, tell me truly what you are muttering. How is it that your body is always smeared with ash, you wear the hide (of an antelope)? How are you having matted hair? O master of the universe, O lord, tell it (to me). You are the god of all gods; you are the superintendent of all rites. You are the lord, O master of the universe, O lord of the universe, O lord of the world.

Mahādeva said:

72-75a. Thus, O brāhmaṇa, I was repeatedly asked by Pārvatī. Then I told everything especially to her. O Nārada, listen. I shall tell (you) what I told Pārvatī, and by which the

lord, giving salvation, will be undoubtedly pleased. He is actually my father, and always my brother. I am always his devotee; and he is always my lord. Therefore, I shall tell (it) to you. Listen to me who am telling (it).

Sūta said:

75b-83. O brāhmaṇas, having thus spoken to Nārada, he told him the thousand names of Viṣṇu, which he had formerly told to Pārvatī. (Thus) they are received by Nārada on the Kailāsa (mountain). Sometime, by chance, he came from Kailāsa to the very wonderful holy place called Naimiṣāraṇya. All the sages residing there, seeing Nārada, the best sage, honoured the noble Nārada. Those best brāhmaṇas, Viṣṇu's devotees, seeing Nārada to have come, had their eyes dilated due to amazement. They showered flowers on him. They offered him water for (washing) his feet, offered him respectful offering, so also waved light before him, offered him fruits and roots and prostrated on the ground like a staff. And they said: "O great sage, we are blessed, since in this region we have had your presence which is pure and which destroys sins. O lord of gods, by your favour we have heard the Purāṇas. O brāhmaṇa, in what way would all (one's) sins perish? How is salvation obtained without giving (gifts), without austerities, without (visiting) holy places, without penance and sacrifices, without (giving) gifts, without meditations, and without curbing the senses, and without (studying) the groups of sacred texts?"

Nārada said:

84. Umā, having saluted (her) dear (lord), the god of gods, the preceptor of the world, i.e. Mahādeva, seated on the peak of Kailāsa (mountain) asked him:

Pārvatī said:

85-88. O highest god, you are the omniscient great lord, revered by all. Even gods like Indra and Sūrya very much adore you. All, having worshipped you, the giver of boons, obtain desired success. You are without birth and death. You are self-born, and are all-powerful. O lord, you, having the quarters as your garment (i.e. naked), the destroyer of Madana,

what do you always meditate upon ? Why do you having matted hair and dusty with ash, practise penance? O lord of gods, what are you muttering? I have a great curiosity (to know it). If I deserve your favour, then tell me (about) that good vow.

Mahādeva said:

89-109. I have not told this to anyone. It is to be kept secret by me. But O good one, I shall tell (to you since) you are devoted (to me) and dear to me. O goddess, formerly, in the Satya-yuga all had pure minds; and knowing Viṣṇu alone to be the lord of all gods, they worshipped him (alone). O dear one, they got great prosperity in this world and in the next. They who were indeed determined, secured that position which all gods and sages suffering pain, did not obtain. Even after having heard from my mouth, gods led by Viṣṇu, did not, through Vedas and various Purāṇic doctrines, understand for certain what the truth is, or which the highest position is, as their minds were confused. O dear one, by means of gold, jewels etc. equal to their weight (given to a brāhmaṇa as a gift), by means of sacrifices like the horse-sacrifice, and by means of bathing at holy places like Vārāṇaśī or Prayāga, so also by means of offering śrāddhas to their dead ancestors at Gayā etc., by means of Vedic recitals and mutterings, severe austeritiets, restraints and checks, by means of kindness etc., by means of serving the preceptors (and elders), by means of duties of the castes and stages of life that are to be observed, so also by means of knowledge, meditation etc. duly practised during crores of existences, they do not reach Viṣṇu, the god of all gods, the supreme bliss. Even all religious men do not reach that position which those mortals who with all their thoughts and having no other course resort to that ancient 'best person' Viṣṇu, who even enjoy themselves, who do not have knowledge or detachment, who are without celibacy etc., who have given up all (other) religious acts, but who mutter only Viṣṇu's names, happily reach, O you who subdue your enemies. That Viṣṇu should always be remembered. He should never be forgotten. All sacred injunctions and prohibitions are his commandments. Nevertheless all gods like Brahmā and all innocent sages have, by means of (uttering fearlessly) Viṣṇu's names, reached the position that was

desired by them. I desiring greater than this, and being blessed, did not accept worship offered to me, but properly propitiated Viṣṇu. Then the lord of the world, to whom his devotees are dear, was actually pleased, and he, Keśava, worshipped these as his portions. He, full of pity (worshipped) deities, manes, brāhmaṇas with oblations offered to gods and dead ancestors. Since then in the three worlds with the mobile and the immobile all gods like Brahmā are worshipped by the favour of the holder of the Śārṅga bow. He also said to me: "You would be superior to and more venerable than me. O Śambhu, I shall also propitiate you and will always receive a boon from you. Being born in the ages like Dvāpara and among men in the Kali age make the people averse to me with the sacred texts prepared by you. So also censure me so that the world become better and better. I shall produce this delusion which will delude people. You too, O mighty-armed Rudra, produce sacred texts that would delude people. O you of great arms, produce (the texts) that are false and spurious. Manifest thyself and keep me hidden."

110-116. Then having saluted the highest lord, I said: "How would the sin of the murder of thousand brāhmaṇas perish? Even after hundreds of crores of kalpas you cannot be forgotten. So I vied (with you). O Viṣṇu, how would I be pure? Therefore, O Govinda, tell me the expiation you desire." Then the lord, being pleased, told the truth about himself, by which, O daughter of the (Himālaya) mountain, I became superior to him. Everyday I adore him with penance, I eulogise him and think of him. Viṣṇu alone is the highest one. Knowledge about him is the means of salvation. This is the verdict of the sacred texts. Anything other than that causes delusion. All that is said like: 'salvation is attained without knowledge', 'my equivalence with Viṣṇu', 'knowledge is obtained by visiting holy places', 'my superiority over Viṣṇu', or 'identity of devotees like me with Viṣṇu', leads to delusion (only and) to nothing else, O chaste lady. Due to that my greatness has become matchless, and I am honoured by the world, O Pārvatī.

Pārvatī said:

117. Then O Śaṅkara, O master, O lord of gods, tell me how I would be the ruler of all and matchless like you.

Mahādeva said:

118-139. O dear one, you have asked well. I shall tell you the principal names of lord Viṣṇu, which would bring about salvation from the three worlds. Of this hymn called *Viṣṇusahasranāma* ('the thousand names of Viṣṇu') Śrī Mahādeva is the poet; the metre is anuṣṭubh; the seed (the cause) is *Hrīṁ*; the power is *Śrīṁ*; the pin is *Klīṁ*. Its application is in the muttering of the names for the attainment of the four goals, viz. moral merit, sensual enjoyments, worldly prosperity and salvation: 'Om, we know Vāsudeva. We think of (that) supreme Brahman; so that Viṣṇu should urge us (on).' When the various assignments of (the parts of) the body, hands would be recited duly, the fruit of that is crorefold. There is no doubt about it. He (should touch his) heart (saying), 'Śrī Vāsudeva is the highest Brahman'. He (should touch his) head (saying), '(He) is the original source'. He (should touch) the tuft of hair on his head (saying), '(He) is Mahāvarāha'. He (should utter) the mystical syllable 'Hūm-Hūm' (saying), 'He is the banner (i.e. the scion) of the solar dynasty'. He (should touch) his eyes (saying), 'Infancy causing wonder to the world by means of the desired sports of Brahmā etc.' He (should touch) the astra, (saying), 'Yathārtha-khaṇḍita-aśeṣa.' Saying, "Salutation to Nārāyaṇa the noble 'man'," he should have the nyāsa everywhere. 'We think of the supreme Brahman, of a pure, good, abode. Om, hrāṁ, hrīṁ, hruṁ, hraiṁ, hroṁ, hraḥ; Klīṁ to Kṛṣṇa, to Viṣṇu. Hrīṁ to Rāma. We think of him, so that the god will urge us on. Kṣrauṁ, we know Nṛsiṁha. Śrīṁ, we think of Śrīkaṇṭha, so that Viṣṇu should prompt us. Om, we think of Devakī's son, Vāsudeva, so that that Kṛṣṇa should urge us on. Om, hrāṁ, hrīṁ, hrūṁ, hraiṁ, hrauṁ, hraḥ. Kliṁ, svāhā (i.e. offering) to Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, dear to the cowherdesses.' Reciting this hymn he should mutter (prayers in honour of) the immutable Viṣṇu, Śrinivāsa and the lord of the world. The wise one should recite the hymn (in honour) of him. Om, Vāsudeva is the highest Brahman, he is the highest soul, he is greater than the great. He is a great lustre, a great light, the great first principle, the highest position. He (is) great Śiva, the great (object) to be pondered over. He is the highest knowledge and the best recourse. He is the highest truth, the highest bliss, the highest joy and

rise. He is greater than the Invisible; he is the highest sky; he is the highest prosperity, the highest lord; he is full, immutable, admitting no alternative, and without a prop. He is unstained, free from fear, unsmeared, unrestrained. He is qualityless; he is whole; has no end; is fearless; is inconceivable; and is fit for the weak. He is beyond the scope of the senses; he is immeasurable; unlimited; he has no lord; has no desire; is immutable and indestructible. He is omniscient; omnipresent; he is everything; he gives everything; and creates everything. He is the ruler of all; he sees everything; he is adorable to all; and observes all things. He is all-powerful; has all the vigour; is the soul of all; and has faces on all sides. He stays everywhere; has all forms; is the source of all; and removes the misery of all. He has all the wealth; he is auspicious on all sides; he is the cause of all causes. He excels all; he is the head of all, is the lord of all gods. He is Ṣaḍviṁśaka (the twenty-sixth principle?); is Mahā Viṣṇu; a great secret; and a great ruler. He is always lofty; always diligent; he is always joy; he is ancient. He is the lord of illusion; the lord of abstract meditation; lord of beatitude; and self-born. He is beyond birth, death and old age. He is beyond time and has gone beyond the worldly existence. He is full. He is truth; he is of a pure and enlightened nature. He is always full of intelligence. Abstract meditation is dear to him. He can be known by abstract meditation. He alone frees (the beings) from the bonds of the worldly existence. He is the ancient soul, he is inwardly the spirit. He is Puruṣottama (highest person). He is to be known from the Upaniṣads. He is difficult to be known. He is free from the three kinds of miseries.[1] Knowledge of the Vedas is his resort. He is without a beginning. He is self-illumined and the master of himself. He can be approached by all. He is neutral. He is Oṁkāra. He is equal on all sides. He is the fourth state of the soul (i.e. Brahman). He is beyond darkness. He is the supreme soul. He has touched everything. He is beyond the scope of speech or mind. He is Saṁkarṣaṇa. He drags everything (unto him); he is death. He is fearful to all. He

1. Tāpatraya—The three kinds of torments: caused by the mind (Ādhyātmika), caused by fate (Ādhidaivika), and caused by animals (Ādhibhautika).

cannot be overcome. He has a wonderful gait. He is Mahā Rudra; he is unconquerable. He is the root cause (of the world). He is joy. He is Pradyumna. He deludes everyone. His divine power is great. He is the only place of happiness. He is desired by all. His pastimes are unending. He subjugates all beings. He is Aniruddha. He is the life of all. He is Hṛṣīkeśa. He is the lord of the mind. The guileless are dear to him. He is Brahman. He directs everything. He is the lord of the life of Brahmā. He supports all beings. He is the lord of the body. He is the soul. He is the origin. He is the lord. He is the Supreme Being. He holds all the threads (of the conduct of the universe). He is the internal soul. He has three abodes. He is the internal witness (i.e. the soul). He has three constituents (viz. sattva, rajas and tamas). He is the lord. He is known by meditating saints. He is Padmanābha (having a lotus arising from his navel). He lies on Śeṣa. He is the lord of Lakśmī.

140-155. His lotus-like feet are always served by Lakṣmī. He always has Śrī (i.e. Lakṣmī or affluence). He is the abode of Śrī. Śrī (i.e. Lakṣmī) always rests on his chest. He is the treasure of Śrī. He is Śrīdhara (i.e. possesses Śrī). He is Hari (i.e. Viṣṇu). He controls Śrī. He is steady. He gives wealth. He is Viṣṇu (literally, one who enters). He has his abode in the Milky Ocean. His chest shines with the Kaustubha (gem). He is Mādhava (the husband of Mā, i.e. Lakṣmī). He removes the afflictions of the world. On his chest is the (mark of) Śrīvatsa. He is the abode of unbounded auspicious qualities. He wears a yellow garment. He is the lord of the world. He is the father of the world. He is the kinsman of the world. He is the supporter of the world. He is the treasure of the world. He is the only one of a sparkling vigour in the world. He is not an egotist. He is full of all wonders. He has accomplished all objects. He is entertained by all. His exertion is never unfailing. Brahmā, Śiva are his excellent consciousness. He is Śiva's grand-father. He is Brahmā's father. He is the superior lord of Indra and others. He is dear to all gods. He is the image of all gods. He is excellent. He is the only resort of all gods. He is the only deity of all gods. He enjoys the sacrifice. He is the creator of the sacrifice. He is the protector of the sacrifice. He is the (chief) man (i.e. deity) of the sacrifice. He wears the garland of wood-flowers.

He is dear to brāhmaṇas. He alone honours brāhmaṇas. He is the family-deity of brāhmaṇas. He is the destroyer of the demons. He destroys all the wicked. He is the only protector of all good men. He is the only belly of the seven worlds. He is the only ornament of the seven worlds. He is the creator, the sustainer and the destroyer (of the world). He holds the disc. His bow is Śārṅga. He holds a mace. He holds a conch. He has the Nandaka (sword). He has a lotus in his hand. Garuḍa is his vehicle. His body cannot be pointed out. He is adored by all. He purifies the three worlds. His fame is endless. His virility is boundless. He is all-auspicious. He resembles crores of suns. He is unconquerable like crores of Yamas. He is the creator of the world like crores of Mayas. He is very powerful like crores of winds. He delights the world like crores of moons. He is a great god like crores of Śambhus. His loveliness is like that of crores of Cupids. He is inaccessible and a destroyer of crores of enemies. He is deep like crores of oceans. He has the appellations of crores of holy places. He is rich like crores of Kuberas. He has amorous pleasures like those of crores of Indras. He is steady like crores of Himālayas. His body contains crores of universes. He destroys sins like crores of horse-sacrifices. He is adorable like crores of sacrifices. He is the cause of satisfaction like crores of (i.e. very large quantity of) nectar. He grants desired objects like crores of desire-yielding cows. His form is of crores of Vedic lores. He is Śipiviṣṭa (i.e. is pervaded by rays). He is Śuciśravas (literally, of pure ears or hearing).

156-168. He supports the universe. His feet are like a holy place. Hearing and talking about him is meritorious. He is the first god. He is the conqueror of the world. He is the killer of Kālanemi. He is Vaikuṇṭha. His greatness is infinite. He is the great joy of the masters of abstract meditation. He is always content. He is of bright thoughts. He is fearless. He is the destroyer of Naraka. He is the only refuge of the poor and the helpless. He alone removes all calamities. He is always capable of favouring the world. He is kind. He is the resort of the good. He is the master of abstract meditation. He is ever grown. He is free from increase and decrease. He has controlled his senses. He is Viśvaretas (i.e. Brahmā). He is the lord of hundreds of the lords of created beings. His feet are worshipped by

Indra and Brahmā. His lustre surpasses that of Śiva and Brahmā. The Sun and the Moon are his eyes. He enjoys everything. He has mastered everything. He has controlled illusion. He has controlled the universe. He is Viśvaksena (i.e. he, on seeing whom even the mighty army of gods retreats and scatters away). He is the best of gods. He is the lord of all bliss. He is adorned with divine, invaluable ornaments. He is characterised by all (good) characteristics. He has destroyed the pride of all demons. He is the all-in-all of all gods, and the leader of all deities. He is the armour of all gods. He is the crest-jewel of all gods. He is the fortress of all gods. He is the adamantine (protective) cage of all that have resorted to him. He is called 'the remover of the fear of all'. He is Viṣṭaraśravas (i.e. of beautiful and efficient ears). He is the supreme ruler. He is the end of the good of all. He has killed (his) enemies. He gives (one) a position in heaven. He is the lord of the life of all deities. He appoints the brāhmaṇas etc. His life is longer by a parārdha than that of Brahmā and Śiva. He is older than Brahmā. He is a child. He is the supreme Being. He is Virāṭ (i.e. the first progeny of Brahmā). He is dependent on his devotees. He is fit to be praised. He accomplishes the object of (i.e. to be had by means of) a hymn. He obliges others. He knows what is fit to be done. He has always given up acts for his self-interest. He is always glad. He is always auspicious. He is always calm. He is always propitious. He is always dear. He is always content. He is always nourished. He is always adored.

169-188. He is always pure. He is the best among those that purify. He is (to be) concealed by the Vedas. He is Vṛṣākapi. He has a thousand names. He is the three yugas. He has four forms. He has four arms. He is the lord of the past, future and present. He is the ancestor of great men. He is Nārāyaṇa (i.e. having the water as his abode). His hair is like the muñja grass. He has spread out by means of all abstract meditation. He is the essence of the Vedas. He is the essence of sacrifices. He is the essence of Sāmans. He is the treasure of penance. He is a Sādhya (i.e. a celestial being). He is the highest. He is an ancient sage. He is solely devoted to steadiness and calmness. He is the destroyer of Śiva's trident. He is the only giver of boons to Śiva. He is the 'man'. He is Kṛṣṇa. He is Hari. He is delighted in righteousness. Righteousness is his life. He is the

first agent. He is all-truth. He removes the pride of all women-gems. He has conquered Madana for all the three times. He is the chief of the sages who produced Urvaśī. He is the first poet. He is Hayagrīva. He is the lord of all the masters of speech. He is full of all gods, Brahmā, and Guru, and the lord of the goddess of speech. He is the source of endless lores. He is the destroyer of the root-ignorance. He knows and gives everything. He destroys the dullness of the world. He is the killer of (the demon) Madhu. He is the master of many crores of hymns. He alone has mastered the Vedas. He is the first learned (being). He is the author of the Vedas. He is the soul of the Vedas. He is the ocean of the holy texts. He has snatched the Vedas (from the demons) for Brahmā. He is the land of birth (i.e. the source) of all worldly knowledge. He is the king of lores. He is the form of knowledge. He is the ocean of knowledge. His intelligence is uninterrupted. He is the fish-god (i.e. the Matsyāvatāra). He has large horns. Being the seed of the world, he looks out. He has easily occupied the entire ocean. He is the propounder of the four Vedas. He is the first tortoise (i.e. the Kūrmāvatāra). He is the prop of everything. He has made the burden of the world (as light) as grass. He has made a stream of gods immortal. He is the cause of the production of ambrosia. He is the support of the soul. He is the support of the earth. He is not a portion of the sacrifice. He holds the earth. He destroyed Hiraṇyākṣa. He is the lord of the earth. He has fashioned śrāddha etc. He removes the fear of all dead ancestors. He is the life of all the dead ancestors. He alone enjoys the oblations offered to gods and dead ancestors; and he alone gives the fruit of the oblations offered to gods and to dead ancestors. The ocean is concealed in his bristles. He has agitated the entire ocean. He is the great Boar (incarnation). He is the destroyer of those who (try to) destroy the sacrifices. He is the refuge of those who perform sacrifices. He is Śrī Nṛsiṁha (incarnation). He is a divine lion. He destroys all undesired things and miseries. He is the only hero of a wonderful might. He alone destroys (evil) forces and charms. His lustre is unbearable (even) to Brahmā etc. He, the foremost in ending a yuga, is extremely fearful. His nails are (sharper) than crores of thunderbolts. He has a form which is unbearable for the world to see. He is the lord of

the group of the great(divine) mothers. He is endowed with inconceivable and unfailing power. He is the destroyer of all demons. He is the destroyer of Hiraṇyakaśipu. He is Death. He is the lord of Saṁkarṣaṇī. He is unbearable even for Yama's vehicle. He destroys all fears. He puts an end to all obstacles. He is the giver (of all kinds) of prosperity. He fulfils all (desires). He is the destroyer of all sins. He is called Siddhimantrādhika (i.e. superior to a hymn giving prosperity). He is the lord of Bhairava (i.e. Śiva). He removes the affliction of Śiva. He is inaccessible to crores of Deaths. He is called Daityagarbhasrāvin (i.e. one tearing asunder the demon-embryos). He roars like the bursting universe.

189-198. He protects everyone that just remembers him. He has a wonderful form. He is great Viṣṇu. He has a body with celibacy as the head. He is the ornament of the upper part of the bodies of the regents of the quarters. He has a string of twelve suns on his head. His anklet is just one head of Rudra. He is the protector of Pārvatī possessed by the Yoginīs (her attendants). He threatens Bhairava. He is the lord of the host of heroes. He is very fierce. He is the enemy of the ecliptic[1]. He is the death of Śambara. He is lord of anger. He is the devourer of the wicked (troubling) the retinue of Rudra and Caṇḍī. He is not (at all) agitated by any one. He is the death of death. He keeps off Kāla, the Death. He destroys all incurable diseases. He softens all evil Planets. He destroys the pride of crores of the chiefs of (Śiva's) attendants. He is unbearable to every Indra. He is difficult to be looked at by gods and demons. He is terrible, causing fear to the world. He protects (beings) from all miseries. He devours the devourer of the world. He is Śiva. He is the cat in the form of the sky, the devourer of the rat in the form of Kāla (Time or Death). His staff-like arms hold endless weapons. He is Nṛsiṁha. He is the conqueror of Vīrabhadra. He is the lord of the secret bevy of witches. He is the eater of the flesh of Indra's enemy. He is Rudra. He is Nārāyaṇa. He is the vechicle of Śaṅkara in the form of a goat. He is the protector of Śiva in the form of a goat. He enjoys a thousand wicked powers.

1. Apama—ecliptic (the sun's apparent orbit).

He is dear to Tulasī (or Tulasī is dear to him). He is a hero. He is the giver of all desired objects to the Vāmācāra (devotees of Śiva). He is Mahāśiva. He has Śivā (i.e. Pārvatī) mounted upon him. He is having a bird. He is the master of the disc. He gives a divine and attractive form to Indra. He gives good fortune to Pārvatī. He is the treasure of illusion. He removes the fear due to illusion. He is full of the lustre of Brahman (or of Vedas). He is full of the glory of Brahman (or of Vedas). He is full of triad (of the Vedas).

199-212. He is Subrahmaṇya. He is Vāmana, the destroyer of Bali. He is Upendra, the remover of Diti's grief. He is the King. He is Viṣṇu. He is the ornament of Kaśyapa's family. He is the giver of his kingdom to Bali. He is the giver of food to all gods and brāhmaṇas. He is Acyuta (i.e. Imperishable). His strides are wide. The holy places are at his feet. He stays at Tripada (i.e. in heaven). He is Trivikrama (i.e. Viṣṇu in his dwarf incarnation). His feet are in the sky. He has purified the three worlds with the water (flowing) from his feet. His feet are fit to be saluted by Brahmā, Śiva etc. He runs quickly with the feet of Dharma. His expanse is inconceivable and wonderful. He is a very strong universal tree. He has cut the upper part of Rāhu's head. He took off the head of Bhṛgu's wife. He is afraid of sins. He is always meritorious. He always cuts off the hope of the demons. He has fulfilled the desires of all gods. He has descended (i.e. has had his incarnations) only for the (good of) the universe. He has always concealed his soul by means of his illusion. He is always the desire-yielding gem for his devotees. He, the sinless one and the giver of boons, has given kingdoms to kings like Kārtavīrya. His unlimited acts are fit to be praised by all. He is Dattātreya. He is the lord of sages. He is always in close contact with the highest power. He delights in abstract meditation. He is always furious. He has removed the lustre of all the enemies of Indra. He drinks the best nectar. He is the gem of an embryo of Anasūyā. He gives enjoyments and salvation. He is the sun to the family of Jamadagni. He produced wonderful power in Reṇukā. He is unstained by (the sin of) matricide. He is the conqueror of Skanda. He gives a kingdom (even) to a brāhmaṇa. He puts an end to all bodies. He destroys the pride of heroes. He is the conqueror of Kārtavīrya.

He is the giver of (the earth consisting) of seven islands. He gives glory to Śiva's worshipper. He is Bhīma. He is Paraśurāma. He is a good preceptor and the enjoyer of everything. He is the encyclopedia of all auspicious knowledge. He is Bhīṣmācārya. He is Agni's deity. He is the preceptor of Droṇācārya. He has a bow that conquers the universe. He is the conqueror of Yama. He is a matchless form of penance. The present of (i.e. received by) him is celibacy only. He is the greatest Manu. He is a bridge for the good (to cross the mundane existence). He is great. He is a bull. He is Virāṭ. He is the first King. He is the father of the earth. He is the only one who has milked (i.e. taken) out all gems. He is great. He is exceptionally diligent from the beginning of his existence. He is Speech. He is Wealth. He is Fame. He is self-chosen. He gives courage to the world. He is the greatest among the sovereign emperors. He holds a unique weapon.

213-218. He is to be secured by sages like Sanaka and increases devotion for the lord. He is the author of the duties of the castes and the stages of life. He is a speaker. He is a propounder. He is the banner (i.e. the scion) of the solar dynasty i.e. Rāma, a descendant of Raghu, and the ocean of virtues, (so also) the descendant of Kakutstha, the king of heroes (or the heroic king), the king, and the leader in the kingly duties. He always has an independent abode. He accepts all auspicious things. He sees only auspicious things. He is a gem among men. He is the sea. He is the superintendent of Dharma. He is a great treasure. He is the abode of all the greatest. He has the vitality of the host of the truths of all sacred texts. The world is under his control. He is Daśaratha's son. He is a king, the resort of all gems. He has produced all modes of conduct. He observes all ways of conduct. He destroys all sins. He is superior to Indra. He is beyond metaphysical and profane knowledge. He is the ocean of forgiveness. He is liked by all excellent, eminent people. He is not perturbed by joy or sorrow. He gave up his empire at the behest of his father. He is not afraid of the rise of his rivals. He gave wealth to the country of Guha. He wears matted hair in emulation of Śiva. He got the mountain of gems from Citrakūṭa. He is the lord of the world. He moves in the forest.

219-228. He performs a sacrifice as he likes. All his missiles

are infallible. He destroyed the eyes of the son of the lord of gods. He is the lunar month of Pauṣa[1] having the days like Brahmā and Indra. He is the killer of Mārīca, and the destroyer of Virādha. He purified the entire Daṇḍakāraṇya that was harmed by the curse of Brahmā. He alone is the holder of the only arrow that killed fourteen thousand fierce demons. He is the enemy of Khara. He is the killer of Triśiras. He is the killer of Dūṣaṇa. He is Janārdana. He performed the last ceremonies of Jaṭāyus, and helped him obtain heaven. He is the king of the hymn which is the all-in-all of Agastya. He scattered away the great heap of the bones of Dundubhi with the end of his sportive bow. He destroyed the demon in the nether world dragging and striking him with a saptatāla (tree). He is the giver of the kingdom to Sugrīva. He grants fearlessness with a large mind. He takes up the form of all the monkeys with Hanūmat and Rudra as the chief lords. He agitated the ocean with one arrow, along with the serpents and the demons. He dried and parched the ocean with the tip of just one arrow along with mlecchas. Formerly he built a wonderful bridge over the sea. He is the treasure of glory. He accomplishes what is impossible to be accomplished. He is dexterous in pulling upwards Laṅkā along with its root. He cut off the family of Rāvaṇa, haughty due to a curse, and a cause of poignant grief to the world. He killed Rāvaṇa's son. He cut off (i.e. killed) Prahasta. He pierced (i.e. killed) Kumbhakarṇa. He is the killer of the pierced ones. He is the only one to cut off Rāvaṇa's head. He has given a kingdom free from fear to Indra. He cuts off (the difference between) what is heavenly and unheavenly. He removes the non-Indra-hood of Indra. He removes the godhead of the demons. He destroys unrighteousness. He is praised by many. He, the enemy of Rāvaṇa, gave the kingdom (of Laṅkā) to Bibhīṣaṇa by means of just being saluted.

229-243. He brought back to life his entire army that was dead by the shower of nectar. He is the only supporter, just by (means of) his name (being uttered), of gods and brāhmaṇas. He is honoured by all gods. He loves Satī offered by the host of

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1. Taiṣī—The lunar month of Pauṣa.

Brahmā, Sūrya, Indra, Rudra etc. He is the all-ruler of the kingdom of Ayodhyā. He is charming to all the beings. He favours and punishes like a master. He loves only the good whether low or high. He shows (ways of) justice to those who belong to his side and others. He accomplishes more with a small object. He is the protector of him who behaved improperly under the pretext of a hunter. He does all equal (i.e. impartial) things. He is a free soul due to the superiority of Pārvatī. He is not abandoned by his dear ones. He is the conqueror of Madana's enemy. He is actually the father of Indra etc. in the guise of Kuśa and Lava. He is never conquered. He is the lord of Kośala. His arms are like those of a hero. He abandoned his brothers for truth. He shook the bright globe of the earth by taking an aim with his arrow. He made the deities possessed of a guardian by his proximity desired by Brahmā and others. He has the host of all beings like the cāṇḍālas, who have reached Brahmā's world. He himself led donkeys and horses. For a long time he protected Ayodhyā. He is Sumitrā's son, Lakṣmaṇa, who was accompanied by Rāma and who killed Indrajit. He (i.e. Bharata) a devotee of Viṣṇu, was delighted with the kingdom on getting the sandals of Rāma's feet. He is Bharata who killed a crore of the unbearable gandharvas. He is Śatrughna, the destroyer of Lavaṇa. He is the lord of physicians. He is the master of the herbs (mentioned) in Āyurveda. He always has the rays of nectar (or he always produces nectar). He is Dnanvantari. He is sacrifice. He uplifts the world. He kills Sūrya's enemy. He supports the gods. He is the lord of Dakṣiṇā (south, or the fee given to a brāhmaṇa). He is dear to brāhmaṇas. With his head cut, he is the sun, the lord of those who give good fortune. He gives everything. His form is unhurt, though with the head cut off with a missile(?). He is the fire of the name of Vājapeya etc. He is intent upon following the practices laid down in the Veda. He is the lord of the Śveta Dvīpa. He is the propounder of the Sāṁkhya (system). He is the lord of all accomplishments. He has destroyed the darkness of delusion by the knowledge manifested in the universe. He is the son of Devahūtī. He is Siddha. He is Kapila and the son of Kardama. He is the master of abstract meditation. He reduced to ash Sagara's sons, due to his meditation being disturbed (by them). He is Dharma. He is

the lord of virtue. He is the lord of Surabhi. He is meditated upon by a pure soul. He is Śiva. He obtained stability only after burning Tripura, and carries the chariot of the universe. He is won over by his devotee Śambhu. He is like a well of nectar to the demons. He is penance.

244-264. He is the universe with the great deluge, and the second king of all serpents. He is god Śeṣa. He has a thousand eyes. He has a thousand mouths, heads and arms. He has joined with the drop-like gems of his hood the ocean, the clouds and the earth. He produces death like fire and Rudra. He has a pestle as his missile. He has a plough as his weapon. He has put on dark-blue garments. He looks charming with the spirituous liquor. He removes the blemishes of the speech and the body. He is discontent. He knocked down Rāvaṇa by merely casting a glance at him. He restrained Bali. He is fierce. He is Balarāma. He is the killer of Pralamba. He is the killer of Muṣṭika. He is the killer of Dvivida. He is Bala(-rāma) who dragged Yamunā. He is the husband of Revatī. Due to the lassitude in former devotion he is the elder brother of Acyuta (i.e. Viṣṇu). He is the son of Kaśyapa and Aditi, called Devakī and Vasudeva. He is (Kṛṣṇa) the descendant of Vṛṣṇi. He is the greatest among the Sātvatas. He is Śauri. He is the perpetuator of the Yadu family. He is of the form of a man. He is the Supreme Brahman. He is Savyasācin (i.e. Arjuna). He is the giver of boons. His grace is desired by Brahmā etc. and his childhood is a wonder to the world. He killed Pūtanā. He broke Śakaṭa, Yamala and Arjuna. He is the enemy of Vātāsura. He is the killer of Keśin. He is the enemy of Dhenuka. He is the lord of cows. He is Dāmodara. He is the god of the cowherds. He is the giver of joy to Yaśodā. He crushed Kāliya. He is dear to all the cowherds and cowherdesses. He easily held the Govardhana (mountain). He is Govinda. He is a joy to Gokula. He is the destroyer of Ariṣṭa. He is the giver of salvation to the cowherdesses mad with lust. He instantly kills him who hurts the earth. He crushed Cāṇūra. He is Kaṁsa's enemy. He is the great one who put Ugrasena on the throne. He made the earth characterised by auspiciousness. He put an end to Jarāsandha's power (or army). He threw and broke Jarāsandha. He gave glory to Bhīmasena. He gave (back making it alive) Sāndīpani's child. He is the conqueror of Kālāntaka and others. He is

the emancipator of all hellish beings. He is the conqueror of crores of all kings. He is the husband of Rukmiṇī. He punished Rukmi. He killed Naraka. He is loved by all beautiful women. He is the enemy of Mura. He is Garuḍa-bannered. He, the lord of all, all alone conquered Rudra, Arka (the Sun), Maruts and others. He removed the pride of the lord of gods. He has adorned the earth with the desire-yielding trees. He is the conqueror of the crores of attendants (of Śiva) like Nandin, pierced along with Bāṇa's arms. He easily conquered Śiva. He is worshipped by Śiva only. He is the giver of victory of Arjuna from a total fall, for Indra. He has cut off the head of Kāśirāja. He is the only one who crushed Rudra's power. He, the lord of the universe, casts a favourable glance. He troubled the son of Kāśirāja. He broke the pledge of Śambhu. He is the leader who totally burnt Kāśirāja. He is the killer of the crores of the attendants of the lord of Kāśī. He honours brāhmaṇas instructing the world. He is subjugated by bevies of young women. Formerly he granted a boon to Śiva. He is the only giver of stability to Śaṅkara. He worships Śiva, his portion. He is the lord of the vow of lucky maidens. He, in the form of Kṛṣṇa, is the killer of Śiva's enemies. He has the body of Mahālakṣmī. He is the protector of Gaurī. He is the killer of Vaidala Vṛtra. His lustre alone is Mucukunda. He did a desired thing for Kālayavana. He is the lord of Yamunā. He is a brāhmaṇa's son led near and devoted.

265-278. He brought down to the earth Indra's splendour for his poor devotee Śrīdāman. He is the only one giving salvation to the wicked Śiśupāla. He is the lord of Dvārakā. He fashioned the crores of treasures at Dvārakā to be reached by (everyone up to) a cāṇḍāla. He alone gave, as he willed, salvation to his principal devotees Akrūra and Uddhava. He turned the ocean into a well of nectar while sporting (there) with children and women. He gave life to Parīkṣit who while in the womb was burnt by Brahmā's missile. He led the daughter of the brāhmaṇa devoted to him. He removed Arjuna's pride. He seized all Kauravas like Bhīṣma with a mysterious figure. He duly cut off all the divine missiles and removed Arjuna's delusion. He removed the fear of the gods and the earth under the guise of a curse to be conceived. He is the enemy of old age and physical diseases, and gives a good condition (to his devotee).

He gives everything that is desired merely when he is remembered. He is god Madana, the lord of Rati. He is Manmatha, and the destroyer of Śambara. He is bodyless (i.e. Madana). He conquered Gaurī's lord (i.e. Śiva). He is the husband of Rati, and is always desired. His arrows are made of flowers. He is Smara (i.e. Madana) who vanquishes everyone. He is dear to Kāmeśvarī (i.e. Rati). He is Uṣā's lord. He is Viśvaketu (i.e. Aniruddha). He is proud everywhere. He is a superior 'man'. He has four souls. He has four modes. He is the author of the four ages. He is the only universal soul of all the four Vedas. He is in crores the portion of everything that is excellent. He is the ancient sage Vyāsa, the author of a thousand branches (Vedic knowledge). He is the creator (i.e. the author) of the Mahābhārata. He is the lord of poets. He is Bādarāyaṇa. He is Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana (i.e. Vyāsa) who is the only teacher of all the (four) goals (of human life). He is the author of the Vedānta. He alone has manifested Brahman. He is the cause of the Puru race. He is Buddha (literally, enlightened). He has won over through meditation the god of all gods. He is without a weapon. He has conquered the world. He is Śrīdhara. He deludes the wicked. He has outcast the demons from the Vedic (fold). He has preserved the meaning of the Vedas and the sacred texts. He is the son of Śuddhodana (i.e. he is Buddha). He is seen and shown. He gives happiness. He is the lord of the assembly. He shows favour to all as they deserve it. He is all void. He gives all that is desired. He has four crores of various principles. He is the lord who has gone beyond intelligence. He is the lord showing the path of the Veda to the heretics. He is the preserver of the texts sacred to the heretics.

279-293. He is Kalki. He is the child of Viṣṇu's glory. He ends the Kali age. He kills all the wicked mlecchas. He has fashioned all the distinguished brāhmaṇas. He propounds the truth. He removes the prolonged hunger of gods and brāhmaṇas. He is Aśvavārādirevanta(?). He destroys the bad condition of the earth. He instantly gives unending glory to the earth. He knows all the ways of life that have perished. Due to his contact with unending gold he is the only brāhmaṇa with entire gold. He is the only ruler of the world that cannot be controlled. He is adorable to the world. He is the banner of victory. He is

the lord of the principle of soul. He is the best doer. He is Brahmā. He is (Śiva) the lord of Umā. He is the best lord. He is the first among the lords of beings. He is Marīci. He is a leader like Janaka. He is Kaśyapa. He is the chief lord of gods. He is Prahlāda, the king of demons. He is the Moon, the lord of stars. He is the Sun, best in lustre. He is Śukra, the lord of the wise. He is the chief of great sages, i.e. Bhṛgu. He is Viṣṇu, the chief among the Suns. He is Bali, and the Supreme Being. He is Vāyu. He is pure fire. He is the greatest. He is Śaṅkara, the chief of the Rudras, and the preceptor. He is the wisest one. He is the chief gandharva, Citraratha. He is the excellent Indestructible (one). He is the first caste. By means of power she is Gaurī, the first lady. He is the best blessing. He is Nārada, the chief divine sage. He is the chief Pāṇḍava, Arjuna. He is the chief discussion and discourse. He is Pavana (Wind). He is the lord of Pavana. He is Varuṇa, the lord of the aquatic animals. He is the best of the sacred places on the Gaṅgā. He plays with dice, the principal among tricks. He is food, the excellent medicine. He is Sudarśana, the best among the missiles. He is the thunderbolt, the best weapon. He is Uccaiḥśravas, the lord of horses; Airāvata, the lord of elephants. He is the lord of those having a wife like Arundhatī. He is Aśvattha, the chief among trees. He is metaphysical knowledge, the chief among the lores. He is Om, the best of the sacred texts of the Vedic hymns. He is Meru, the chief of the mountains. He is the month of Mārgaśīrṣa, the first among the months. He is the best of times. He is the soul, accomplished in ancient times, of a day etc. He is Kapila. He is the master of Sāma Veda. He is Garuḍa, the first among the birds. He is the desire-yielding cow. He is the best friend, removing affliction. He is the desire-yielding gem. He is the best preceptor. He is the mother. He is the most kind father. He is the lion, the lord of beasts. He is Vāsuki, the lord of serpents, and the king, best among men. He is brāhmaṇa, the chief of the castes. He is the mind, best due to compassion. Repeated salutation (to him). These are the thousand names of Vāsudeva, Viṣṇu. It (i.e. *Viṣṇusahasranāma*) puts an end to all faults.

294-312. It very much enhances devotion. It is an inexhaustible means of the worlds like those of Brahmā, and the only

means to heaven. It is the only staircase to Viṣṇu world. It destroys all griefs. It gives all pleasures. It instantly gives the highest salvation. It fully purifies the dirt of the mind like lust and anger. It gives peace. It purifies even men with great sins. It gives all the desired fruits to all beings. It removes all obstacles. It destroys all evils. It destroys terrible pain. It destroys acute poverty. It removes the three debts. It is a secret. It gives wealth, grains and glory. It gives all affluence. It gives all (kinds of) success. It gives all kinds of auspiciousness. It gives the fruit of a crore of (visits to) holy places, sacrifices, austerities, gifts and vows. It puts an end to the dullness of the world. It is the promoter of all lores. It gives a kingdom to those who are deprived of their kingdom. It removes all the diseases of the sick persons. It gives a son to the barren women. It gives life to those whose (span of) life is diminished. It destroys the (ill effect of) being possessed by ghosts and of poison. It destroys the oppression caused by a Planet. It is auspicious. It is meritorious. It enhances (the span of) life by means of being listened to, being recited and being muttered. The religious merit of him (is as much) as all the Vedas with the Vedāṅgas, crores of hymns, the Purāṇas, sacred texts, Smṛtis (would give) when heard and recited. O dear one, if a man mutters or recites a letter, a verse or a line every day, then all one's desired objects are soon achieved. Then (what would be obtained by listening to or reciting) the entire (text)? Such certainty is not seen in all (other) acts. O good one, this is to be secretly preserved by you and is to be recited only for your own interest. It is not to be given to a non-devotee of Viṣṇu, whose mind is overcome with doubts, who lacks devotion and faith and who looks upon Viṣṇu as an ordinary (deity). It should be given to the son, to a disciple, to a friend with a desire of their good. Those of a dull intellect will not grasp it without my favour. It gives instant fruit in the Kali age. Nārada will take it to the community in (the various) kalpas, by which the misery of unfortunate persons will come to an end. In the Āryāvarta it will live with two or three devotees of Viṣṇu. There is no better abode than Viṣṇu. There is no greater penance than Viṣṇu. There is no greater religious merit than Viṣṇu. There is no hymn that does not pertain to Viṣṇu. There is no greater

truth than Viṣṇu. There is no greater sacrifice than Viṣṇu. There is no greater meditation than Viṣṇu. There is no better recourse than Viṣṇu. For him who has devotion to Viṣṇu, what is the use of many hymns, and very extensive sacred texts and thousands of Vājapeya sacrifices? Viṣṇu is full of all sacred places. The lord is full of all sacred texts. Viṣṇu is full of all sacrifices. I am telling the truth and the truth (only). I have told (you) this which is the full essence of everything up to Brahman.

Pārvatī said:

313-330. I am lucky. I am favoured. I am blessed, O lord of the world, since I heard from you this hymn, this secret which is very difficult to be secured. Oh! how very painful it is that the fools suffer in the mundane existence, when Viṣṇu, the destroyer of all miseries and the lord of gods is present (everywhere), and due to dedication to whom Śiva is seen by people to be naked, having matted hair, with his body smeared with ash and an ascetic. Which (other) god is there who is superior to (Viṣṇu) the lord of Lakṣmī and the enemy of Madhu? Which better position is there than that Viṣṇu, that principle which is every day thought of by you the lord of abstract meditation? Whom, ignoring him, do the fools, proud of their knowledge, worship? O lord, you have for a long time deprived me, that you have not manifested to me this lord, having the divine powers like you. Oh, Viṣṇu, the lord of all, the best among all excellent gods, the first preceptor of you, is looked upon as an ordinary god! The greatness of the great is that they worship those who deserve worship. Those having forgiveness ignore even those who have become their enemies without any cause. I too, in my childhood saw my father's starving subjects. Unable to nourish them due to difficulty they were supported after having propitiated Lakṣmī. Gods like you, Indra and others with kind-hearted friends and kinsmen shine, due to the subjects in whose proximity she stays. Without her where can godhead remain? Where can glory and possessions remain? All living beings live in anguish. Without her there can be no righteousness, no worldly desires, no (satisfaction of) lust. (Then) salvation too is (far) away. How can the hungry and the unfortunate ones have concentration through abstract meditation? He who controls Lakṣmī, is alone the

essence of the worldly existence, and the only leader of the entire world. Śaṅkara even abandoned her. He, the magnanimous one, is full with humility, purity, handsomeness, wealth, of uprightness and valour surpassing that of all (others). Who can equal that Viṣṇu, god of gods, without whose partial incarnation all this world gets dissolved? But the deluded ones call this to be a fault. He has no birth, no death. Nor has he any desired object to be obtained. But, O lord due to my mind attached to lust etc., due to my having been one with you, due to an error, if I am unable to recite every day these thousand names of Viṣṇu, then tell me, O bull-bannered god, that name, by which I shall get that fruit (obtained by the recital of Viṣṇu's thousand names).

Mahādeva said:

331. O you beautiful one, O you charming one, (recite) 'Rāma, Rāma, Rāma'. The thousand names are equal to that.*

CHAPTER SEVENTYTWO

Merit of Reciting the Viṣṇusahasranāma

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-8. O daughter of the Himālaya mountain, if brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas or śūdras recite this especially every day, they, having wealth and grains go to the highest position of Viṣṇu. By reciting a verse, half a verse, a line, or half a line a man goes to salvation (and stays there) till the universal deluge. O goddess, those best men who recite the thousand names of Viṣṇu with a special commitment, go to the imperishable position (of Viṣṇu). The wealth and the (span of) life of him who recites it once, twice or thrice (a day), increase till the (end of the regime of) fourteen Indras. He would obtain sons, grandsons, and large wealth and affluence. O you beautiful one, what is the use of repeatedly saying other things? The thousand names of Viṣṇu

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*Verses like 219b, 239, 260, 261a, 264 are not sufficiently clear.

give the highest bliss. A man who has first offered him worship fully, has offered him worship (every day) for a year, when Viṣṇu is worshipped(?). There should be no distraction especially while reciting (the hymn). If a distraction is had while reciting it, (the span of) the life and wealth (of the reciter) decrease.

9-17. As many sacred places as there always are on the Jambū Dvīpa, (all) those are (present) just there (where) the thousand names of Viṣṇu (are recited). Just there is Gaṅgā. There is Yamunā. There is Veṇī; there is Godāvarī; there is Sarasvatī. (Thus) all sacred places exist there where are (recited) the thousand names of Viṣṇu. This (hymn) is very pure; it is always dear to the devotees. With the mind full of the feeling of (being Viṣṇu's) servant and with devotion it should always be called to mind. Those wise ones who recite (this hymn) called *Viṣṇusahasranāma* ('the thousand names of Viṣṇu'), reach, after being free from all sins, Viṣṇu's proximity. The (span of the) life, strength and wealth of those who every day recite it at dawn, increase. A devotee of Viṣṇu, keeping awake during the night in the Kali age, obtains salvation as long as fourteen Indras (rule). That worship offered to Viṣṇu, for Tulasī, with (the utterance of) each name of Viṣṇu, should be known to be the worship superior to a crore of sacrifices. O Pārvatī, those brāhmaṇas who recite it while going along the way, have indeed no sins of the journey. O goddess, listen, I shall tell (you) the greatness of Viṣṇu. Those best men who listen to it are meritorious and are of the form of merit.

CHAPTER SEVENTYTHREE

Rāmarakṣā Stotra

Mahādeva said:

1-12. Om, the great sage Viśvāmitra is the seer of the hymn called *Rāmarakṣā*. Śrī Rāma is the deity. The metre is anuṣṭup. Application of the muttering of this hymn (is) for pleasing Viṣṇu.

I meditate upon the imperishable Viṣṇu, Śrī Rāma, having lotus-like eyes, resembling atasī flower, wearing a yellow garment and infallible. May Rāma protect (my) heart. May Śrīkaṇṭha protect my throat. May the protector of the sacrifice protect my navel. May the protector of the universe protect my waist. May Daśaratha's son protect my hands. May he, of a universal form, protect my feet. May the excellent god, the lord of Sītā protect my eyes. May the universal soul protect the tuft of hair on (my) head. May he who gives desired objects, protect (my) ears. May the protector of gods protect (my) sides. May he, inaccessible to a crore of deaths, and eternal lord of the universe always protect (my) body. May he who destroys sins and propagates instruction in the world, protect (my) tongue. May Rāghava protect this. May Keśava protect (my) hair. May he, the creator of the universe and called Dattavijaya, protect (my) thighs. A man who would recite this (hymn called Rāma-)rakṣā, endowed with Rāma's power, would have a long life; would be happy, learned, and get divine wealth. (This hymn) the Rakṣā, sacred to Viṣṇu, always protects all beings. A man who would remember 'Rāma, Rāmabhadra, Rāmacandra' is free from sins and obtains eternal salvation. This (hymn) was told by Vasiṣṭha to his preceptor of the form of Viṣṇu. Then from Brahmā it came to me; and I told it to Nārada. Nārada brought it down among the good people on the earth. Those best men who, while resting at home or going along the way, recite this, enjoy religious merit.

CHAPTER SEVENTYFOUR

Merit Earned through Gifts

Mahādeva said:

1-9a. O goddess, listen. I shall explain to you righteousness (*dharma*) (the excellent way of life), hearing which a man is never born on the earth. From righteousness a man would get the triad of material welfare (*artha*), satisfaction of desires (*kāma*)

and salvation (*mokṣa*). Therefore, that learned man who would desire righteousness through penance, gifts, vows and restraints, is said to be wise. Similarly by means of sincere penance heaven is obtained. He who has come here (i.e. is born on the earth) and is free from anger and greed, would have salvation after an existence and obtains Viṣṇu's position. He becomes passionate (*rājasa*) by means of penance practised through passion (*rajas*). By means of vicious (*tāmasa*) (or ignorant) penance he becomes hard-hearted (*tāmasa*) and does cruel deeds. That is said to be the penance of the demons, giving salvation to those who are of a vicious nature. That penance which is righteous (*sāttvika*) is permanent. Even in a forest blemishes do occur in the case of the passionate one, desiring wealth etc., being controlled by (*rajas*) and ignorance (*ṭamas*), living in a solitary forest, and subsisting on air. Control over the five senses (practised) even at home is (also) a penance. For him who is not engaged in condemned acts and who is detached from passions, his house is a penance-grove. The householder's stage is said to be (a man's) own duty. It is very difficult to be overcome by (even) those who have restrained their senses. That best auspicious stage (of life) is affected.

9b-15. O you daughter of the (Himālaya) mountain, the householder's stage of life is said to be excellent for the wise ones by Brahmā and others. An ascetic after practising penance in a forest and being oppressed by hunger, comes to the house of a food-giver. With devotion he (i.e. the food-giver) gives him food and gets a portion (of the fruit) of his penance. There is no doubt that the man who properly follows the householder's stage, the best on the earth, enjoys human pleasures here (i.e. in this world) and goes to heaven. O goddess, how can sin come to them who always practise (the duties of) a (householder)? The householder's stage is most meritorious. A house is always like a sacred place. In this meritorious stage of a householder gifts should be especially given. In it worship of deities is practised, food is given to guests; it is the refuge of guests. Therefore, it is said to be most blessed. Those men who having resorted to a house(-holder's stage) honour brāhmaṇas, never lack in (long) life, wealth, so also sons. O beautiful lady, listen. I shall tell (you about) a gift which cleanses all great sins,

which brings about every (kind of) wealth, and which gives fruit in this world and in the next.

16-26. When an auspicious time has come, a man, after having duly worshipped his deity, and having performed his obligatory and occasional (duties), should give a gift according to his own capacity. He who having snatched another's wealth would give it to brāhmaṇas and deities, would after seeing (i.e. having gone to) hell, go to the highest position, as Śatānīka was emancipated along with his sons due to having given gifts. So also after having given (gifts) to brāhmaṇas, he will go to heaven as a result of his righteousness. The religious merit of those who have given (gifts) at holy places, has been told. O goddess, listen. I shall tell (you) in brief about the gift of wealth. (Such) a gift purifying the body was never there, nor will be there. Due to it a man becomes free from sins. There is no doubt about it. Having enjoyed pleasures, he then goes to the ancient Viṣṇu. Formerly it was narrated by Brahmā to the magnanimous Bhārgava Rāma, full of sin. During the Sun's passing through Libra and Taurus, the king was engaged in a sinful act. He indulged in killing and binding (men). He was engaged in eating what ought not to be eaten. He caused abortions and violated his preceptor's wife. These and a liar are born in bad stocks. They perform sacrifices for those for whom they should not be performed; they ask for (gifts) from the censurable ones; they are always angry; and are always engaged in troubling the good. They are destroyed through faith, and with their life condemn righteousness. They are full of sins and know that they are dead (i.e. they would soon die). Knowing this, O goddess, they should especially give gifts. On the earth many devotees of Viṣṇu practising righteousness are well-known on the earth.

CHAPTER SEVENTYFIVE

The Greatness of Gaṇḍikā

Mahādeva said:

1-11. O goddess, I shall properly tell you the greatness of Gaṇḍikā. O daughter of the (Himālaya) mountain, as Gaṅgā is, so she is. Similarly many Śālagrāma stones are found there. So also her greatness is told by the best sages. There are birds, plants, insects and viviparous beings that are meritorious just on account of seeing her, O Pārvatī. That great river Gaṇḍikā rises in the north. O daughter of the (Himālaya) mountain, she, being remembered again and again destroys sins. There god Nārāyaṇa, causing welfare, always exists. Those, holders of conches and discs, who live near him, have, after reaching Death, had four arms and divine forms. Sages stay there, and especially gods, Rudras, serpents, so also yakṣas. No doubt should be raised in this matter. Near it is a place of raised ground, having the form of Viṣṇu. At this place, there is an image of many forms, giving salvation. There are twentyfour species of beings there. One is of the form of a fish and another, a black figure, the giver of salvation, is said to be there at the place called Viṣṇu by the wise. There is (another figure) called Kalki and tawny (in colour), (as is) told by me. Many other figures of various shapes are also seen there. All these various figures, of different forms stand there. She is Gaṅgā. She is great. She is auspicious. She gives merit, desired objects and salvation.

12-26. In that land, Viṣṇu, accompanied by me, definitely stays even now. There is no doubt about this. A man is free merely by her touch from all sins like causing an abortion, killing a child, and especially killing a cow. Brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, śūdras, so also (men of) other castes—all of them are freed on seeing the water of Gaṇḍikā. This (river) is holy like (the river) Veṇī—especially so for the sinners. (Even) the killer of a brāhmaṇa is freed there, what, to say about others! O Pārvatī, always, at all times I go (there). Brahmā has indeed said that this is the king of holy places. Sages have bathed and given gifts there. O beautiful lady, in Āṣāḍha, on an auspicious occasion, I go there. For a month I duly bathe there; I also continuously mutter (the

hymn) which emancipates (a being). Therefore, since I had gone to the place holy to Viṣṇu, I became a devotee of Viṣṇu. This very great holy place was formerly fashioned by Viṣṇu. It gives a good position to Viṣṇu's devotees. It is said to be very purifying. O goddess, it is always very difficult to be born as a human being in this mundane existence. The holy place on (the bank of) Gaṇḍikā is not easily accessible. To reach the place holy to Viṣṇu is (still) more difficult. Therefore, the best brāhmaṇas should go (there) in the month of Āṣāḍha. Having gone there, the best brāhmaṇas should especially put on the marks of conches, discs etc. That is said to be (a) very pure (act). The holy mark of a conch should be (put) on the left (arm), the mark of a disc should be (put) on the right arm. This is said to give salvation to brāhmaṇas. (The marks) should be carefully put on. Especially the brāhmaṇas should put on the marks of conches and discs. When the mark is put on, those men belong to Viṣṇu. O you beautiful lady, there is no other holy place like Gaṇḍakī. There is no other vow like Dvādaśī. There is no other god like Viṣṇu. (I am) repeatedly (telling this). Those best men who listen to the greatness of Gaṇḍikā, enjoy happiness in this world, and (after death) go to Viṣṇu's world.

CHAPTER SEVENTYSIX

The Hymn Causing Prosperity

Mahādeva said:

1-6a. O beautiful lady, listen. I shall tell you the hymn and the rise due to that. There is no doubt that on hearing it a sinner—killer of a brāhmaṇa, is freed. The Creator told it to Nārada. I am (now) telling it to you. The self-born god of unlimited lustre had told it to him after holding his charming arm. (At the time of) obsequies one should cause (Viṣṇu) to be remembered. (He is:) the revered Nārāyaṇa, with Śrī. The god Viṣṇu has the disc as his weapon. He holds the Śārṅga (bow). He is Hṛṣīkeśa. He is the ancient Puruṣottama. He is Ajita (i.e.

unconquered). He holds a sword. He is Jiṣṇu (i.e. one desiring to conquer). He is Kṛṣṇa; he is eternal. He is the Boar having one horn. You (O god) are of the nature of the past, the future and the present. Rāghava is the immutable Brahman; is the truth and is there in the beginning and at the end. He is the great Dharma of the people. He is Viśvaksena. He has four arms.

6b-19. He is the general of the army. You (O god), are the protection. You are Viṣṇu, the lord of the world. You are the source. You are immutable. You are Upendra; you are Madhusūdana. You are Pṛṣnigarbha. You are Dhṛtarcis. You are Padmanābha. You destroy (your enemies) in a battle. Indra and great sages call you to be the refuge of those who seek your shelter. The great sages (also describe you) as the soul of the Vedas, the greatest of Ṛk and Sāman. You are the sacrifice. You are the Vaṣaṭkāra (exclamation). You are Oṁkāra. You torment your enemies. You are Śatadhanvan (literally, having a hundred bows). You are Vasu. You are the predecessor of Vasus. You are the lord of beings. You are the first creator of the three worlds. You are the self(-born) master. You are the eighth of the Rudras and the fifth of the Sādhyas. Aśvins are your ears. The Sun and the Moon are your eyes. O you who torment (your) enemies, you are seen at the end, in the beginning, and in the middle. They do not know the beginning or the end of him (i.e. of you). (They do not know) who you are. You are seen in all worlds, so also among cows and brāhmaṇas. (You are seen) in all directions, in the sky, on the mountains and in the cages. You have a thousand eyes. You possess Śrī, you have a hundred heads, you have a thousand feet. You support the beings and the earth with the mountains. You are in the (interior of) earth, in water, a great surpent with all beings. You remain supporting the three worlds, the gods, the gandharvas and the demons. O Rāma, I am your heart. Goddess Sarasvatī is your tongue. Gods are the small hair on your limbs. You have created them with your divine power. The night is said to be the closing of your eyes; and the day to be the opening of your eyes. Your body would be (i.e. is) perfection. The entire world is not without you. There is that stability in your body. You are the earth. Fire is your anger. Śeṣa, the glorious Lakṣmaṇa, is your favour. With your ancient strides

you have crossed over the three worlds. You made Indra the king (of gods). You bound (down) the great demon Bali. Having withdrawn all the worlds unto you, you the Death, have just put them in yourself.

20-28. You turn the visible and the invisible into one fierce ocean, and in no other way. You took up an excellent, great, divine body. You killed Hiraṇyakaśipu who created fear among all beings. Being of the form of one having the face of a horse you resorted to the bottom of the nether world. The great oblation was brought together, so also repeatedly the secret (*obscure*). That which is heard to be the greatest one, which is greater than the great, is said to be the highest soul. You alone are said to be the highest hymn, and the highest lustre. You are the pure oblation offered to the gods and to the manes. You are the attainment of heaven and salvation. They describe you who are beyond Prakṛti as the maintenance, the creation, and the destruction (of the world). You are sung by the Vedas to be the sacrifice, the sacrificer, the sacrificial priest reciting the prayers of Ṛgveda at a sacrifice, and the officiating priest, and to be the enjoyer of the fruits of sacrifices. Sītā is Lakṣmī. You are Viṣṇu, god Kṛṣṇa and the lord of the created beings. To kill Rāvaṇa you entered a human body. O you, best among those who uphold righteousness (*dharma*), this should be (i.e. was) done by you. O Rāma, you killed Rāvaṇa, and delighted the deities. O god, your power is infallible. Your valour is never fruitless. Rāma, seeing you is fruitful. Your praise is never fruitless.

29-42. O god, those men who on the earth are attached to you, the ancient, best 'man', will be successful and devout. Those men who will narrate this holy hymn of praise—the old account—are never defeated. How would the best men, devoted to Puruṣottama, be defeated here? O god, (except you) there is none in the world who is a distinguished giver of boons. Even he who is a great sinner should recite thrice (a day) this hymn of praise of the magnanimous Rāghava, which is the best of hymns. At the time of the sandhyā (prayer), and especially at the time of a śrāddha, this hymn should be carefully and with a devout heart, recited by the best brāhmaṇas. This is a great secret; it should never and at no place be told (to anyone). By

reciting it he would obtain salvation, and he would certainly be Viṣṇu. The best brāhmaṇas should recite this hymn first at the end of the worship of the piṇḍas. (A man doing so) would obtain the eternal (fruit of the) śrāddha. It is very pure, and gives salvation to men. He who, after having written it, would preserve it with profound meditation, has his life, wealth, and power increased day by day. The ancestors of an intelligent man who after writing it, would sometime give it to a brāhmaṇa, are free and go to the highest position of Viṣṇu. A man who mutters or recites this hymn obtains the fruit which is obtained by the recital of the four Vedas. O great goddess, the holding of a conch, disc etc. at the time of a śrāddha by brāhmaṇas proficient in the Vedas, would surely be inexhaustible. He should put round his neck a garland sacred to Viṣṇu and should have the marks of a conch, a disc etc. (on his body). Then, muttering and reciting this hymn, he should duly and devoutly perform the śrāddha. Then it becomes perfect, not otherwise. Therefore, a devout man should carefully recite it. A man obtains everything by reciting it, and gets happiness.

CHAPTER SEVENTYSEVEN

The Vow of Ṛṣipañcamī

Mahādeva said:

1-11. I asked the lord of the world about the vow best among the vows, leading to the prosperity of sons and grandsons, and giving pleasure and good fortune. Now, O beautiful lady, I shall tell it to you. Listen. This account of the excellent vow of the sages is divine. A woman in her menses, a great sinner, is necessarily freed from great sins after observing this vow. O goddess, it becomes inexhaustible to the dead ancestors, and is the means of righteousness, worldly welfare and satisfaction of sexual desires.

Śrī Viṣṇu said:

Formerly there was a brāhmaṇa named Devaśarman, of great arms, master of the Vedas, and always devoted to study. He maintained the sacred fire; he was always engaged in the six[1] duties (of a brāhmaṇa). He was well honoured by all castes; and had sons, animals and kinsmen. The wife of that chief brāhmaṇa was in her menses when the month of Bhādrapada came, and it was the fifth of the bright half. He, with his mind controlled and senses restrained, performed śrāddha of his father. At night he would invite (i.e. he invited) brāhmaṇas, giving happiness and good fortune. When it was the bright morning, he would make (ready) other vessels. He made his wife cook food in all the vessels. It had eighteen flavours, and gave delight to the manes. Then he separately gave invitations to brāhmaṇas. All the brāhmaṇas, the reciters of the Vedas came at mid-day. The best brāhmaṇa gave them respectful offering and water for washing their feet etc. Polluted by the menstrual flow he duly washed (their feet etc.) at that time. All they went into the house, and (sat) upon the seats indicated to them.

12-20. He specially offered them food with sweets. He performed the śrāddha duly and after offering the piṇḍas. He, engrossed in meditating upon his dead ancestors, gave everything to the brāhmaṇas like tāmbūla, gifts and various garments. (Then) he dismissed all the brāhmaṇas, intent on (giving) blessing. Then to his hungry relatives and kinsmen, he duly gave food at the time of the meal. When he had sat at the door of his hut at night, the brāhmaṇa's wife brought water and washed his feet; then the bitch and the bull talked to each other. (The bitch said:) "O dear one, listen to my words—as to how the daughter-in-law acted towards me. I shall tell (just) like that. I shall not tell otherwise (i.e. in a different way). Some time by chance I went into (our) son's house to protect the milk that was there. It was not seen by the daughter-in-law. The milk was drunk by a serpent; and it was seen by me. Then I drank it all. The daughter-in-law saw it. Due to that fault (of me) of touching the milk, my waist was broken for good. O lord,

1. Ṣaṭkarma—The six duties of a brāhmaṇa are: studying, teaching, sacrificing, acting as a priest at a sacrifice, giving gifts, and accepting gifts.

due to that grief, I have been miserable, My waist is broken. I do not relish food."

The bull said:

21-30. O bitch, listen. I shall tell you the cause of my misery. When this day came, my son gave food to brāhmaṇas, but did not care for me. He did not at all, at any time, give me water and grass. I, a sinner, conceived to be so, have been tied without food. O bitch, this has undoubtedly happened due to my former sin.

O goddess, at that time the words were heard by the wise son. "This is actually my father who has been an animal in my house. And undoubtedly this is actually my mother. Due to (ill) luck she became a bitch. What should I definitely do?" Thinking like this, the brāhmaṇa did not get sleep. At night he became very thoughtful and remembered the highest lord. "I have sincerely practised many righteous acts. How shall I have auspicious (things)?" Thinking like this, he again slept at night. When it was the bright morning, he went to the sages. Among them Vasiṣṭha offered him a good welcome. (Vasiṣṭha said to him:) "O best brāhmaṇa, tell the reason of your arrival." The brāhmaṇa who was thus asked, then saluted (Vasiṣṭha). "Today my existence is fruitful. My acts are fruitful today; my dead ancestors are pleased on (my) having had your sight which is difficult to be had.

31-41. I performed the śrāddha as told (in the sacred texts). I well fed the brāhmaṇas. I gave food to all members of my family. After the meals, the bitch came there and spoke (to the bull, as) we have a bull in our house. O brāhmaṇa, hear from me the words which she spoke to him. "The milk-pot in the house was polluted by a serpent. I saw it, and was undoubtedly very anxious: 'When with this milk itself, food would be cooked, then due to that food, all brāhmaṇas will die'. O lord, having thought like this, I drank (all) the milk. The daughter-in-law saw it and beat me. Due to that I becoming lame am moving. Being very grieved what do I do?" Knowing her grief, the bull said to the bitch: 'O bitch, listen. I shall tell (you) the cause of my misery. O bitch, I am actually his father in the former

existence. Today he fed brāhmaṇas, and gave them much food. But he did not place grass or water before me. Due to that grief at that time, I have become miserable.' On hearing this account, I did not get sleep during the night. O best sage, my anxiety started just then only. I am given to Vedic studies. I am proficient in Vedic rites. The two are very miserable. So thinking 'What shall I do?' I have come to you. Remove my grief."

The sage said:

42-47. O Ugrajanman, listen to what you did in the former existence. This one was the best brāhmaṇa in the auspicious city of Kuṇḍanagara. In the month of Bhādrapada, the vow of Pañcamī that fell then, was neglected by him due to the śrāddha of his father etc. On that śrāddha day, O innocent one, his wife had menstruation. She did all like giving food to the brāhmaṇas. The most sinful and wicked one did not know it and performed (the śrāddha). On the first day she is a cāṇḍāla woman; on the second the killer of a brāhmaṇa. On the third she is said to be a washerwoman, and is purified on the fourth day. Due to that sin his wife became a bitch; and O you of good vow, this one was born as a bull due to that act.

Ugrajanman said:

O you of a good vow, tell me especially that vow, gift, sacrifice or (visit to a) holy place, due to which my parents would have salvation.

The sage said:

48-62. In the bright half of Bhādrapada, there is Ṛṣipañcamī. By doing (the vow of) it the sin of the menstrual flow, perishes. It gives sons and grandsons and gives salvation to the dead ancestors. In a river (i.e. on the bank of river), or a well, a tank, or in a brāhmaṇa's house, a circle with cowdung should be fashioned. He should put a pitcher there. On it he should put a vessel which is full of grains used by the sages. So also (he should put) a sacred thread, a fruit with gold. He should also install seven (images) of sages, causing happiness and good fortune. Those who have kept the vow, should invoke all of them and worship them. He (who observes the vow) should, eating once a day, offer eatables

made from the corn used by the sages, and should eat that food (after) worshipping the sages. He should properly, very devoutly and with hymns, worship them. Then with ghee and gifts he should offer the libation. He should duly give (these) to a brāhmaṇa, (saying), 'May this please the sages'. Having listened to the account properly, having gone round (the images), he should separately offer incense, ghee, eatables of five kinds, and a respectful offering. "May the sages always abide by me. May they complete my vow. May they accept the worship offered by me. Repeated salutations to sages. May Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, so also Prācetasa, Vasiṣṭha, Marica, Ātreya accept my worship. Salutation to you." With incenses and charming lamps he should thus offer the worship. By the power of this being done the dead ancestors are at once released. O child, due to the ripening of the former acts and the power of the blemish of menstruation this was done. There is no doubt that he will get release.

For the salvation of his dead ancestors he observed the vow. They, intent upon giving him blessings, went along the path of salvation. Those best men who observe the vow of Ṛṣipañcamī, as told to the brāhmaṇa, should be known as meritorious. Those best men who observe this excellent vow of the sages, enjoy many pleasures in this world, and go to Viṣṇu's position.

CHAPTER SEVENTYEIGHT

The Hymn Called 'Apamārjana'

Mahādeva said:

1-2. I shall hereafter tell you about the excellent vow of the sprinkling with water, as told by Pulastya to the magnanimous Dālabhya. It destroys all faults caused by diseases. It gives auspiciousness. I shall tell it to you. Listen, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain.

Śrī Dālabhya said:

3-4. O revered one, please tell me that by which all beings

can avoid suffering from the troubles caused by poison, diseases etc; they are overcome with leprosy and (evil) Planets, and are always troubled. There are many severe diseases brought about by magic or by female deities[1] having destructive powers.

Pulastya said:

5-13. O best sage, those men who have pleased Viṣṇu with vows, fasts and restraints, will not be afflicted by diseases. Those men who have not observed an auspicious vow, have not given gifts, have not practised penance, have not visited a sacred place, have not worshipped a deity, have not given food in large quantities, are known to be afflicted by diseases and (similar) faults. He who attends upon Viṣṇu, especially obtains undoubtedly whatever he mentally desires like good health or great wealth. He does not suffer from physical or mental disease and is not afflicted by poison or a Planet. He does not have the fear of the contact of the deities having destructive powers. All his sins perish; and the Planets are always auspicious (i.e. favourable) to him. He who has pleased Viṣṇu and looks upon all beings as himself, is invincible even to gods. He has pleased Viṣṇu with a fast etc. When he (i.e. Viṣṇu) is pleased, desires of men are fully satisfied. O best sage, they are free from diseases, are happy. They enjoy pleasures. They have no enemies. Nor do they suffer from diseases and effects of magical forces. No evil act like (the evil influence of) a Planet or a disease takes place in their case. The weapons of Kṛṣṇa, like the disc etc. which are unobstructed, protect him who has waited upom Viṣṇu from all calamities.

Śrī Dālabhya said:

14-15. Tell me especially what the kind persons who see the ancient Vāsudeva in all beings, who look equally upon all, should do for the miserable persons who have not propitiated Govinda and are overcome with grief.

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1. Kṛtyā—A female deity to whom sacrifices are offered for destructive and magical purposes.

Śrī Pulastya said:

16-29. O best sage, I shall tell it. Listen with an attentive mind. It removes the evils like diseases and blemishes and destroys fever etc. Having assigned (i.e. supposing that) Śrīdhara (is) in the tuft of hair on the crest of the head, and Śrīkara below it, Hṛṣīkeśa in the hair, and the highest Nārāyaṇa on the head, one should assign Viṣṇu above the ears and him who lies in the water on (i.e. to) the forehead. Having assigned the lord to the two eyebrows, and Hari between them, (having assigned) Narasiṁha to the tip of the nose, and Arṇaveśaya (i.e. he who lies in the ocean) to the ears, and the lotus-eyed one to the eyes, he should assign Bhūdhara below them. He should assign Kalkinātha to the cheeks and Vāmana to the roots of the ears. Having assigned the conch-holder to the bones on the forehead, and Govinda to the mouth, and Mukunda to the row of teeth, Vākpati to the tongue, Rāma to the chin and Vaikuṇṭha to the neck, Balaghna to the root of the arms, the destroyer of Kaṁsa to the shoulders, Aja to the two arms, and Śārṅgapāṇi to the two hands, Saṅkarṣaṇa to the thumb of the hand, Gopa to the rows of fingers, Adhokṣaja to the chest, Śrīvatsa in its middle, (he should assign) Aniruddha to the breasts, and Dāmodara to the belly, Padmanābha to the navel, and Keśava below it. (He should assign) god Dharādhara to the penis, and Gadāgraja to the anus, the wearer of yellow garments to the waist and (should assign) Madhu's enemy to the pair of thighs, the enemy of Mura to the calves of the legs, Janārdana to the pair of knees, Phaṇīśa to the ankles, and (he should assign) Trivikrama to the two feet. The wise man should assign Śrīpati to the toe, Dharaṇīdhara below it, and Viśvaksena to all the pores of the hair. Having assigned Matsya to the flesh, he should assign Kūrma to the marrow, Varāha in the fat and (should assign) Acyuta to all his bones. (He should assign) Dvijapriya (i.e. dear to the brāhmaṇas, or to whom brāhmaṇas are dear) to the marrow of the bones and flesh, Śvetapati to the semen, the sacrificial Puruṣa to the entire body and the highest soul to his soul.

30-43. Having thus made the rite of assignment, he would actually be Viṣṇu. As long as he would not talk anything, he would remain merged in Viṣṇu. He, being calm and creator of

tranquillity here, should take pure darbhas with their roots and tips, and should sprinkle all his limbs with the tips of the darbhas. A devotee of Viṣṇu especially brings about this auspicious tranquillity to a person afflicted by a disease, a Planet or poison. O brāhmaṇa, due to that all diseases are destroyed. (He should pray:) "Om, salutation to Śrī Paramārtha (i.e. the highest truth), to the magnanimous Puruṣa. (Salutation to the) formless one, and to him of many forms, to the pervader, to the Supreme Soul, to Varāha, to Narasiṁha, to Vāmana who gives happiness." Having meditated and saluted Viṣṇu, he should assign Viṣṇu's names to the parts of his body. "Having saluted the spotless one, the pure one, the one who removes bodily diseases and sins, Govinda, Padmanābha, Vāsudeva, Bhūbhṛt (i.e. the supporter of the earth), I shall utter words. Let them be successful. (Salutation to) Trivikrama, Rāma, Vaikuṇṭha, Nara, Śrī Varāha, Nṛsiṁha, (and) to the magnanimous Vāmana; to Hayagrīva, to Śubhra; O Hṛṣīkeśa, remove the inauspicious, that which torments others, that which is not beneficial, that magic which is discharged (at me). O ageless one, destroy the employment of the poisonous touch of a great disease. Salutation to Vāsudeva. Salutation to Kṛṣṇa, the holder of the sword. Salutation to Puṣkaranetra, Keśava, Ādicakrin, to you having a yellow spotless garment, O Kiñjalkavarṇāgrya. Salutation to you who has held Mahādeva on his body, so also a disc, and to cakrin. Salutation to the Trimūrtipati who held the earth on his fang. O Śrīvallabha (i.e. dear to Lakṣmī, or to whom Lakṣmī is dear), salutation to you, to the great sacrifice and (great) Varāha, O you whose ends of hair are like heated gold, and whose eyes are like burning fire. Salutation to you, O divine lion, the touch of whose nails is more (sharp) than that of the thunderbolt. O you having the characteristics of Ṛg, Yajus and Sāman, salutation to Kaśyapa, to Atihrasva.

44-65. Salutation to you, of the form of Vāmana, and going over the earth. O Varāha, destroy all miseries, the fruits of sins. O you of large fangs, destroy that fruit (of sins) O you, Nṛsiṁha, having a thunderbolt-like touch and bright tips of the teeth and nails. With your sound remove his miseries, O you destroyer of affliction, and taking up any desired form through the utterances of the Ṛg (Veda), Yajus (Veda) and Sāma (Veda). May

Janārdana pacify all his sorrows. May Govinda, having broken and cut off his agony (remove) his fever lasting for a day, two days, three days, so lasting for four days, very severe, constant fever, so also fever arising from the vitiated state of the three humours of the body, and accidental fever. (May he remove) the pain in the eyes, headache and stomachache. (May he remove) lack of breath, severe asthma, all round heat (i.e. fever), shivering, diseases of anus, nose, feet, so also leprosy and consumption. (May he remove) diseases like jaundice, so also severe urinary diseases, so also those diseases due to (the humour of) wind (in the body), cuts, boils etc. May they, wiped off by Vāsudeva, perish. (Even) by uttering the name of Viṣṇu, (may) all of them perish. May all of them, struck with Viṣṇu's disc, perish. By means of the medicine of the utterance of the names, viz. Acyuta, Ananta, Govinda, all the diseases vanish. I am telling the truth, (and) the truth (only). May Viṣṇu, when (his names are) uttered, destroy the poison which is immobile, mobile, artificial, so also that which is due to teeth, nails or from the sky (i.e. air), which is due to beings, and which is extremely unbearable. (May he destroy) the imps, the deadly demons, so also demonesses[1] attending upon Durgā, severe (disease of) white round spots[2] on the face, (divine mothers like) Revatī and Vṛddhirevatī, the imps called Vṛddhika and Mātṛ also. May the account of Viṣṇu in his childhood remove (the influence of) young imps. All the seizures (by imps etc.) of the old and of children perish that moment only when Viṣṇu is seen. Viṣṇu has his mouth fierce due to the fangs, and is fearful to the demons. Seeing him those imps especially go away. O Śrī Nṛsiṁha, O great lion, O you having a row of flames, O you of a bright face, O you bright one, destroy all the imps (etc. affecting) him. (Remove also) those diseases, great portents, enemies, great imps, and those cruel beings, severe afflictions due to Planets, the diseases in the wounds caused by weapons like diseases of the skin, so also the boils etc. and the imps etc. settled on the limbs, O you, who are the protector of the three worlds, and who ward off wicked demons. O Sudarśana of great lustre, cut off (i.e.

1. Sākinī—A kind of female being attendant on Durgā, and supposed to be a demon or fairy.

2. Maṇḍalaka—White leprosy with round spots.

destroy) the severe fever. Remove the (effect of) wind, cuts, and severe, great poison. (Remove) the very severe, undoing pain, and the flame of poison with the skin disease Om, Hāṁ, Hāṁ, Hūṁ, Hūṁ; kill the enemies with your very sharp axe.

66-84. Salutation to the revered Sudarśana, you having the body destroying miseries. (May) Viṣṇu, the Supreme Soul (remove) all those other wicked (forces) which give pain to beings; salutation to you, O Vāsudeva (who has) taken up some form. O god, O excellent Acyuta, having thrown the Sudarśana disc, fearful due to rows of flames, destroy all the wicked. O you Sudarśana, great disc, O you excellent weapon of Viṣṇu, O you of a sharp edge, O you of a great speed, O you having the brilliance of a crore suns, O you Sudarśana, having great flames, and of a great sound, cut off all calamities, demons, and sins, O you fearful one. O Sudarśana, destroy sins, make (us men of) good health; in the east, in the west, south and north, may Narasiṁha, the universal soul, protect (us) with his roars. On the earth, in the atmosphere, behind (us), by (our) sides, in front of us, may Viṣṇu, of many forms, protect (us). Since it is a fact that everything consisting of gods, demons and human beings is full of (i.e. pervaded by) him, may the entire misery of this one perish. Since it is a fact that Viṣṇu, the lord of abstract meditation is sung (i.e. praised) among gods, may the entire misery of this one perish. Since it is a fact that the highest soul Viṣṇu is sung (i.e. praised) in the Vedāṅgas, may Viṣṇu, the universal soul give him happiness. May there be peace. May there be auspiciousness; may unhappiness perish, (since) I have sprinkled with darbhas springing from the body of Vāsudeva. O Govind, O you who have cleaned (everything by sending) away (the evil forces), salutation (to you). You are Viṣṇu like that. Yet all miseries perish due to utterance of Hari's (names). When Viṣṇu is remembered, all blemishes, imps (or Planets) and all poisons and ghosts are destroyed. These darbhas have sprung from Viṣṇu's body. I am Viṣṇu myself remaining in front. I have destroyed all his misery. He should be comfortable, since such are Viṣṇu's words. May there be peace, auspiciousness and happiness. Whatever[1] is his misery is thrown into the

1. *Praṇaśyatu sukham* etc. seems quite incongruous.

salty ocean. Let it perish. May he always have comfort due to the recital of (the names of) Viṣṇu. Let the sin go wherefrom it has come." A devotee of Viṣṇu, desiring the good of beings, should do this great sprinkling of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu at the time of diseases. Due to this all miseries completely vanish. For the purification of (i.e. from) all sins, the sprinkling of Viṣṇu is effective. Whatever (blemish), wet, dry, small or big, like the murder of a brāhmaṇa etc. (there is) all that quickly perishes like darkness at the appearance of the sun.

85-91. As small animals perish from the lion ('s attack), so diseases and blemishes flee away. May imps, fiends, goblins etc. perish on merely hearing the name of Viṣṇu. Those who are very greedy for money should never do it. Having done the sprinkling a man, desiring his good, should not accept (any money etc.). Those who are desireless, and who know the beginning, the middle and the end, and who are always calm, should do it. Otherwise it would not give success.

This sprinkling (in honour) of Viṣṇu is a matchless success of men, a great protection of men; it is a great weapon. It was formerly told by Brahmā to his son Pulastya. Pulastya himself told it to Dālabhya. It is publicised by Dālabhya for the good of all beings in the three worlds. The (narration of) Viṣṇu's sprinkling is over. O goddess, I have told it to you, since you are always devoted to me. A person listening to this devoutly destroys all blemishes and diseases.

CHAPTER SEVENTYNINE

The Importance of Apamārjana

Mahādeva said:

1-16. The sprinkling (called *Apamārjana*) is divine and very wonderful. It (i.e. the hymn) should be recited especially for fulfilling the desire of having a son. A wise man should recite this hymn for fulfilling all his desires. The life, wealth and

strength of those twice-borns who recite it once, twice or thrice a day, increase. A brāhmaṇa obtains knowledge; and a kṣatriya gets a kingdom. A vaiśya obtains wealth and prosperity, and a śūdra gets devotion—others also get devotion by reciting, listening to, and muttering it. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, he gets the fruit (of the recital) of Sāmadeva. Just at that moment only the entire multitude of his sins perishes. O goddess, knowing this, people, being calm, should recite it. Certainly they have sons and full wealth. That devotee of Viṣṇu who, writing it on a birch-leaf, has it (on his person), goes to Viṣṇu's highest position after having enjoyed happiness in this world. He who, having recited one verse, would offer it to Tulasī, has visited all holy places on his having worshipped Tulasī. This great hymn belongs to Viṣṇu and gives salvation. Being recited it resembles the gift of land, and the person (who recites it) goes to the world of Viṣṇu. He should especially recite the hymn with a desire to go to Viṣṇu's world. Men, being composed, should recite it for the (long) life of the children. It brings about peace to the children who are overcome by diseases and imps (or Planets). Being possessed by a ghost, so also (the influence of) poison, perishes just on its recital. That brāhmaṇa who, having put a Tulasī-garland round his neck, would recite it, should be known as a devotee of Viṣṇu, and he goes to the world of Viṣṇu. That brāhmaṇa who has (on his body) the marks of a conch, a disc etc., who has the (Tulasī) garland round his neck, and who always recites this hymn, is said to be a devotee of Viṣṇu. On leaving this world he goes to Viṣṇu's world. He is free from delusion, illusion, hypocrisy and thirst (i.e. desires). A man should recite this divine hymn. He would obtain the highest bliss. Those brāhmaṇas who are known to be the devotees of Viṣṇu are blessed on the earth. There is no doubt that they have emancipated themselves with their family. They, highly devoted to Viṣṇu, are most fortunate in the world. They should always be devoted (to Viṣṇu). They are the followers of the lord (i.e. Viṣṇu).

CHAPTER EIGHTY

The Greatness of Viṣṇu

Śṛī Prāvatī said:

1. O lord of the universe, tell me the greatness of lord Viṣṇu, on hearing which greatness a man is never born again.

Mahādeva said:

2-6. O beautiful lady, I shall narrate the excellent importance of Viṣṇu. By hearing it one would obtain salvation in the end. Yudhiṣṭhira, having saluted with his head put on the ground Bhīṣma, Devavrata who was very wise, who was greatly devoted to acquiring spiritual knowledge, who was the resort of all sacred books, who had conquered his senses, and who was sinless, who, the noble one, was invincible even to gods along with Indra, who was true to his word, who had conquered anger, who was firmly settled in equanimity, who had great faith in Nārāyaṇa, the lord of the world, the refuge, to whom his devotees were dear, by means of his acts of speech, mind, and body, who was the abode of virtues, who was calm, and who was the grandsire of the Kurus, asked him this:

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

7-13. Some speak about Dharma (i.e. righteousness) to be great. Some say wealth is great. Some speak approvingly of gifts. Others (recommend) exertion. Some approve of Sāṁkhya, others of the great Yoga. Some speak approvingly of knowledge; some describe the sacred texts to be great; some say detachment is excellent. Some look upon the rites like Agniṣṭoma (sacrifice) as great. Some to whom clods, stones and gold are alike, look upon the knowledge of the self as supreme. Some wise men say that curbs and restraints are great (i.e. important). Some others (say that) kindness is great. Some ascetics look upon harmlessness as supreme. Some say purity is supreme, some men say worship of deities is great. Men who are stupefied by sinful acts, are perplexed in this matter. O you who know the way of life, O you the best among those who wield weapons, please tell me

which of these is the supreme act that should be done by the noble.

Mahādeva said:

O chaste lady, for the good of the people I shall tell you that account which took place between Bhīṣma and Yudhiṣṭhira on the earth. Hearing these questions, Bhīṣma then said to Yudhiṣṭhira:

Bhīṣma said:

14. O you son of Dharma, listen to this great secret which releases (a human being) from the worldly existence. You should listen to it properly and understand it well.

15-28. In this matter only they narrate this old, auspicious dialogue that took place between Puṇḍarīka and Nārada, the great sage. Puṇḍarīka was a very intelligent brāhmaṇa endowed with (the knowledge of) scriptures. He was in the first stage of life, and was always under the control of his preceptors. He had conquered his senses, controlled his anger. He was greatly devoted to performing the sandhyā (prayers). He was proficient in the Vedas, Vedāṅgas and expert in all sacred texts. With good oblations and sacred fuel he offered oblations to fire in the evening and morning. Having properly meditated upon lord Viṣṇu, he worshipped the lord of the world. He was engaged in penance and studies actually like Brahmā's sons. With water, sacred fuel and flowers etc. he again and again worshipped his preceptor. He served his mother and father. He lived on alms. He was free from jealousy. He studied the Vedic lore. He was greatly attached to prāṇāyāma (suspension of the breath). He who was the soul of all, who had no desire for the mundane existence, who was noble, had a thought to cross over the ocean of worldly existence. Having abandoned like (blades of) grass his mother, father, brothers, friends, friendly persons, maternal uncles, relatives and kinsmen, his possession like that of Indra, rich with wealth and grains, very costly fields where crops of all kinds grew, the very wise, very happy one, eating only vegetables, roots and fruits roamed over the beautiful earth. He went to Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Gomatī, Gaṇḍikā, Śatadru,

Payoṣṇī, Sarasvatī, Prayāga, Narmadā, and the great river Śoṇa; so also to Prabhāsa, sacred places on the Vindhya and the Himālaya. He went to those hermitages that are situated in the Naimiṣa (forest) or (holy places) like Puṣkara, so also those (situated) in Kurukṣetra, and on Govardhana etc. The great contemplative saint went (to these) properly and at a proper time.

29-41. Once that noble, self-possessed, wise Puṇḍarika, led by former acts, went to Śālagrāma. It was resorted to by sages knowing the truth and having penance as their wealth. It was a charming abode of sages, and was well-known even in the Purāṇas. It is adorned with discs etc. and the stone slab is marked with a disc. It is charming, solitary, extensive; and always pleases Viṣṇu. Moreover, the beings there are marked with discs and are meritorious-looking. Exhibiting the auspicious, holy places, they move there. That (Puṇḍarīka) of a good vow bathed in the Devahrada holy place on (the bank of) Sarasvatī in that very meritorious place viz. Śālagrāma. (He also bathed) in the Jātismaryā, Cakrakuṇḍa, and places situated on Cakranadī. There were other holy places in that village only. There also he wandered. Then the mind of that noble-minded one, due to the power of the holy place and the lustre of the holy places was delighted. That Puṇḍarīka too, with his mind purified by the holy place, devoted to the path of abstract meditation and having penance as his wealth stayed there only. He, all alone, indifferent in regard to opposite pairs of feelings (pleasure or pain), with his senses curbed, eating (i.e. subsisting on) vegetables, roots and fruits, content, viewing everything equally, desiring success, worshipping Garuḍa-bannered god (i.e. Viṣṇu) with great devotion and according to the precepts as told in the sacred texts, lived there only for a long time. By means of restraints and checks, so also (various) postures, suspension of the breath, (visiting) holy places, and constantly restraining his organs, steady abstraction of his mind, contemplation, profound meditation, he, free from blemishes, always properly studied Yoga. He propitiated the lord of all with (rites told in) the Vedas, Vedāṅgas and Purāṇas, and then he obtained purity.

42-51. Free from anger and hatred, as it were being Dharma incarnate, he propitiated the lord of gods with his mind fixed on him. The lord Viṣṇu with his eyes long (i.e.broad) like lotuses

was pleased. The lord (said to) Nārada: "I am pleased with this intelligent one." Then, sometime, Nārada, resembling actually the Sun, and knowing the truth, and very lustrous, went to the lord of gods. The revered one, with his mind full of devotion for Viṣṇu, engaged in the good of Viṣṇu's devotees, desired to see Puṇḍarīka, the treasure of penance. The very intelligent and very generous one saw Nārada adorned with an orb of lustre and the only repository of all Vedas, to have come to him. With his palms joined, he, with his mind pleased, bowed down, and duly offering materials of worship, again saluted (him). 'Who is this of a wonderful form, bright, having put on a charming dress having a musical instrument in his hand, and decorated with an orb (indicating) victory? Is he the Sun, or Fire, or Indra, or Varuṇa?' Remaining thinking like this he spoke to him of great lustre.

Puṇḍarīka said:

Who are you, of a great lustre? Where from have you come? O revered sir, seeing you on the earth is generally very difficult. O Lord, I have never seen a man like you. O sinless one, please tell fully (about) what I have indicated.

Nārada said:

52-55. I am Nārada. Always curious to see a powerful devotee of Viṣṇu like you I have come (here), O brāhmaṇa. The lord's devotee, an excellent brāhmaṇa, or even a cāṇḍāla, purifies (one) if he is remembered, gratified or worshipped by chance. I am the servant of Vāsudeva, the god of gods, the holder of the Śārṅga (bow), having in his hands a conch, a disc, a mace, and the only eye of the three worlds.

Thus addressed by Nārada, with his mind full of devotion, he, very much amazed at his sight, spoke sweetly to the brāhmaṇa.

Puṇḍarīka said:

56-62. I am (most) fortunate among the human beings; I am fit to be very much honoured even by gods. My dead ancestors are happy. Today I have got the fruit of my existence.

O divine sage, especially favour me, your devotee. O learned one, wandering (everywhere), I shall, with my acts, do (what you tell me). Please advise me about the great secret (act) fit to be done by me. You are the asylum of all the beings—especially of Viṣṇu's followers.

Nārada said:

O brāhmaṇa, here (i.e. in this world) there are many sacred texts and many acts. There are many kinds of duties (of men), so also are many minds. O best brāhmaṇa, the diversity in the world is due to that only. Otherwise all beings have either pleasure or pain. Some have understood the world to be just of the nature of intelligence, momentary, having no soul, and not depending upon external objects. Others say that this world springs from the Unmanifest, the eternal one; is eternal and merges into him only.

63-71. The souls are said to be many, eternal and omnipresent. (So say) others, the best among the intelligent, and always greatly devoted to observing it. Others think that the soul lasts as long as the body (lasts). Even in the body of an elephant or an insect the great primordial Brahman exists. Some say, the world will exist at other times as it exists today. This is an eternal stream. Who is the Creator? Others who have conquered their minds say: "That which is perceived by the senses does not exist. Whence can there be heaven etc.?" Some say this (world) has no controller. Others say it has. (Thus) averse to the truth there are extremely varied opinions. In the same way, other cheats, presenting their own logic, according to their intelligence and knowledge, speak with (i.e. about) many differences. O you treasure of penance, being attentive to logic, I shall tell you the meritorious truth, destroying the fierce mundane existence. The gods and men know its source. They are known through a proof. The deluded ones do not (know) the proof. They have not, in accordance with their capacity, understood the future, the past, the very remote, and that which is settled (i.e. dependent) upon the present objects.

72-77. The sages have explained the sacred texts, as they have come down in order in the former form. Those (texts) accomplishing the highest truth should be known as an authority.

O best brāhmaṇa, that knowledge which, removing blemishes like anger and hatred, springs from the power of study is called *Sacred Scripture.* Fruit, action and truth are knowledge, vision and the soul. The characteristic of other sacred texts is that it is without the concept of origin etc. It is the eternal ancient feeling of the self and is beyond the cognizance (i.e. reach) of the senses. It is just intelligence, and should be known as immortal, unending, unborn and immutable, spotless, that has manifested itself and has remained in a manifest and an unmanifest form. It is known to be pervaded by Viṣṇu, and is (also) known to remain separate from him. It is reflected upon by the meditating saints, is not known by those averse to the truth; it is noticed to be different from the minds, separate and so not existing in the soul. O child, O you innocent one and of a good vow, listen. I shall tell you who have asked me what Brahmā formerly said.

78-80. O child, O you innocent one and of a good vow, listen. I shall tell you who have asked me what Brahmā formerly said. Once having duly saluted Brahmā, the grandsire, staying in his world I asked the unborn and the immutable one: "O grandsire Brahman, tell me properly what is said to be the highest knowledge, and what is thought to be the highest Yoga."

Brahmā said:

81-87. O dear one, listen attentively to the acquisition of true knowledge, ample significance of which has sprung up from a few treatises, and the act of adoration of which involves no trouble. It is told by him that the twentyfifth (principle) traditionally described as *Puruṣa* is the soul of all beings. He is Viṣṇu, the resort of the world, the highest, ancient soul. He is engaged in the creation, destruction and maintenance of the world. The ancient one is the supreme god of the three souls. O brāhmaṇa, he should always be propitiated. They (who propitiate) the lord of the world (alone) see him as the support of the world, and after some time as the past, the future, the great and so also separated (from the world). With the eye of knowledge they see him to be gross, subtle, and different. Their mind is fixed on him. Their life has gone to him, and they are highly devoted to Viṣṇu. To those who are dull of intellect, who are wicked, who are

vicious due to their knowledge (based on) wrong logic, who say he is separated from the senses, he appears differently.

Nārada said:

88-89. O sinless one, listen also to something else being told by me. It was formerly told by Brahmā, the lord of the world, himself. Brahmā told about their welfare to gods led by Indra, and to sages who had asked him, O you of a good vow.

Brahmā said:

90-98. Dharma is solely devoted to Viṣṇu. The eternal worlds, sacrifices, so also the various sacred texts are solely devoted to him. So also the Vedas with the Vedāṅgas and other (texts). O wise ones, Viṣṇu, Hari is the lord of the universe. There are the five elements like the earth, and he is immutable. The wise should know the entire world to be full of Viṣṇu. Yet sinful men who are deluded, do not realise that the entire mobile and immobile world is full of his illusion only. (But) he who has his mind fixed on him, his life gone to him, and knowing the truth, realises (this). Viṣṇu, the guardian of the three worlds, is the lord of all beings. In him all this world dwells and (from) him it springs up also. Rudra destroys the world. While maintaining the world he is called Viṣṇu. I am in (i.e. look after) the creation. So also there are other regents of the worlds. He is the support of all. He has no (i.e. he does not require any) support. He is full and without parts. He is subtle and gross. He is higher than the highest—the other one. Submit only to him, doing all the work of annihilation. That Viṣṇu is delared to be our father and procreator.

All gods, thus addressed by Brahmā having the lotus as his source, saluted god Viṣṇu, Janārdana, the lord of all worlds.

99-116. Therefore, O you brāhmaṇa sage, you too become greatly devoted to Viṣṇu. Who else but he, very generous one, would, when solicited, give (to him who solicits)? Accept that Viṣṇu, the lord of the world, the god of gods, only as the father and the mother. One should everyday carefully please the preceptor, the lord of gods with a sacrifice, or with austerities or with study. Inexhaustible pleasures should be had in heaven.

(For that) O brāhmaṇa sage, accept that Puruṣottama only. For him what is the use of many hymns? What is the use of many vows for him? The hymn *Om Namo Narāyaṇāya* ('Om, salutation to Nārāyaṇa') accomplishes all (desired) objects. A man may put on rags. He may have matted hair. He may have a staff. He may be clean-shaved, O brāhmaṇa. Or O best brāhmaṇa, he may be adorned. No distinguishing mark is the cause of (i.e. represents particular) way of life. Even those who are always cruel, wicked or given to sinful acts, go, on being greatly devoted to Viṣṇu, to the highest position. And Viṣṇu's devotees, free from sins, are not smeared with streams of sins. They, with their minds conquered with harmlessness, purify the entire world. A king known as Kṣatrabandhu, who harmed beings, reached, from Keśava's abode the highest place of Viṣṇu. A very energetic king, Ambarīṣa, knower of the highest truth, obtained Viṣṇu's position after propitiating Viṣṇu. Many other brāhmaṇic sages, calm, and with their vows fulfilled, obtain great success after meditating upon the highest soul. Prahlāda, the great joy, formerly waited upon, worshipped and meditated upon Nārāyaṇa Hari, and was protected by him only. A bright and very religious king named Bharata, having waited upon him for a long time, obtained highest salvation. A celibate, a householder, a recluse or a mendicant, does not at all reach the highest position without propitiating Viṣṇu. He who has, during many existences, a thought like this: 'I am the servant of Viṣṇu's devotees', has all his desired objects obtained, and such a man obtains residence in Viṣṇu's heaven. There is no doubt about this. Then what about those whose life is devoted to him, and who have fulfilled their vows? Those who reflect upon the (highest) principle and have their mind concentrated should meditate upon that ancient Nārāyaṇa, the highest soul, who has pervaded the world.

Bhīṣma said:

117-136. Speaking like this, Nārada, the divine sage, knowing the highest truth, and engaged in obliging others, vanished there only. Puṇḍarīka too, who was religious-minded, who had devoted himself to Viṣṇu, muttering the eight-syllabled hymn *Om namo Narāyaṇāya*, always uttering the words, 'O universal

soul, be pleased with me', establishing Govinda of the nature of nectar in the lotus of his heart, the ascetic free from the pairs (of pleasure, pain etc.), having no possessions, lived all alone for a long time in the pure and pleasing Śālagrāma (village). The very intelligent one does not see anything except Viṣṇu even in a dream. He too did not have sleep obstructing the goals of human life. By means of penance, celibacy, and especially purity, and when the impression of many existences had taken a root in one way or the other, he whose sins had gone away by the grace of the god of gods, and the witness in all the worlds, obtained great success as a devotee of Viṣṇu (would get). He saw Viṣṇu, dark, lotus-eyed, having a conch, a disc and a mace in his hands, wearing a yellow garment and of a good form. Lions, tigers and other beasts harming beings, gave up their natural enmity, and gathered near him; and O son of Pāṇḍu, with the functions of their senses kindly disposed, moved as they liked; and they pleasingly secured one another's welfare. Like that the water of the lakes and rivers was clear; and the seasons also were full of pure force and very pleasing. The breezes had a pleasing touch, the trees were full of flowers and fruits. All objects became favourable to the intelligent one. When Viṣṇu, the lord of the god of gods, who loved his devotees, was pleased with him, the mobile and immobile world was pleased with him. Then, at some time, the lord, the master of the world, having long eyes like lotuses manifested himself before the intelligent Puṇḍarīka. He had a conch, a disc and a mace in his hands. He wore a yellow garment. He was very bright. His eyes were large like lotuses. His face was like the orb of the moon. He had (on his person) bells, ear-rings, necklaces, armlets, and had a thread round his waist. He had the mark of Śrīvatsa, wore a yellow garment, and was adorned with Kaustubha. His body was surrounded with (i.e. he had put on) a garland of wood-flowers; his crown and ear-rings were shining. He shone with a bright sacred thread and with a hanging necklace of pearls. The god of gods was waited upon with chowries and fans by gods with Indra, siddhas, gandharvas, excellent sages, yakṣas, best nāgas, and groups of celestial nymphs. The sinless Puṇḍarīka having seen the lord of gods recognized the noble Viṣṇu; and bowing with folded palms, and with his mind pleased praised him.

Puṇḍarīka said:

137-146a. Salutation to you, O Viṣṇu, (to you) who are unstrained, eternal, qualityless and noble, and the only eye of the world. You are the lord of all beings, and you have no lord (who controls you). You are Govinda, you are Garuḍa-bannered, and destroy fear and affliction by favouring the beings. They say that all this rests in you who take up many forms. Everything is full of you. You are different from this world. You have created the world. O you having produced a lotus from your navel, salutation to you. Salutation to the mighty soul known from all the Upaniṣads. O destroyer of Kaiṭabha, O lord of all gods, you alone are the cause (of everything). Be pleased, O you living in my heart and holding a conch, a disc and a mace. Salutation to him who was the origin of all beings and who supports the earth. (Salutation to him) who takes up many forms, (to him) the strong Viṣṇu whose greatness gods, lords of gods, like Brahmā etc. do not realise, and which can be measured (only) with penance. I salute you, the greatness of whom, not being within the scope of words, is not had (i.e. known). You are not touched by birth etc. You are always to be truly reflected upon; in the same way, due to compassion for your devotees, you, O Puruṣottama, are seen in forms like Matsya (the Fish), Kūrma (the Tortoise) etc.

Bhīṣma said:

146b-148. O hero, Puṇḍarīka praised that Puruṣottama, the lord of the world, whom he desired to see for a long time—Padmanābha, Trivikrama, Viṣṇu. Trivikrama Viṣṇu spoke to Puṇḍarīka, the noble one, in a serious voice:

The lord said:

149-150. O child, O very intelligent Puṇḍarīka, I am pleased with you. Well-being to you. Ask for a boon. I shall give you whatever you have in your mind.

Hearing these words spoken by the lord of gods, the very intelligent Puṇḍarīka requested him like this:

Puṇḍarīka said:

151-153. What a great disparity between you (always) wishing the good (of all) and me of a wicked intellect? O Mādhava, O lord of gods, order that which is beneficial to me.

Thus addressed, the lord, being much pleased, spoke to the noble Puṇḍarīka standing by him with folded palms. "May you be happy. O you of a good vow, come along with me. You, helping (others), and an eternal soul, will always be with me."

Bhīṣma said:

154-169. When Viṣṇu, loving his devotees, spoke like this, drums sounded in heaven, and a shower of flowers fell down. Similarly gods like Brahmā said, 'Good, good'. Siddhas, gandharvas and especially kinnaras sang. There only the lord of gods, the lord of world took him, and mounting on Garuḍa, and being saluted by all people went. Therefore, O best king, you too, full of devotion to Viṣṇu, setting your heart and soul on him, engaged in doing good to his devotees, resort to him, after having duly worshipped him. Listen to his account which destroys all sins. O best king, adopt that means in great detail, being full of devotion to Viṣṇu, by which the universal soul will be pleased. Men averse to Viṣṇu do not reach him even after having performed hundreds of horse-sacrifices and Vājapeya sacrifices. He who has (but) once uttered the two letters *Ha-ri* has girt up his loins (i.e. is ready) for going to salvation. They in whose heart Viṣṇu, dark-blue like a lotus, abides, profit and succeed. Whence would they be defeated? He who, being composed, would listen to or recite this everyday, is free from all sins, and goes to Viṣṇu's world.

O you daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, having heard this greatness of the names (of Viṣṇu), religious merit, worldly prosperity and salvation undoubtedly accrue (to him). A brāhmaṇa who is born in a pure family and who is greatly devoted to the Vedas, who is Viṣṇu's devotee is of the nature of Viṣṇu and never any other brāhmaṇa. That man who utters the name (of Viṣṇu) in (i.e. with) his mouth, who is intent upon meditating upon Viṣṇu in his heart, who has (the marks of) a conch and a disc, wearing Tulasī-garland, should be known, O learned one, to be liberated while living. Having enjoyed many

pleasures, he delights, along with twentyone (members of) his family, in Viṣṇu's world. Undoubtedly Puṇḍarīka, according to his capacity, got salvation. Due to devotion Viṣṇu is permanently pleased. At the time of the worship of a deity and penance, the singing of (the praise of) Viṣṇu, especially in one's own house in the Kali age, is said to be equivalent to the chanting of Sāmans.

CHAPTER EIGHTYONE

The Importance of Gaṅgā

Pārvatī said:

1-2. O you very intelligent one, tell (me) again the importance of Gaṅgā, having repeatedly heard which, all the sages are free from attachment. O lord, O master of all, what kind of greatness is of her? I have formerly learnt about her origin. I have (however) not heard about her greatness. You are the first among all beings and the ancient god.

Mahādeva said:

3-11. The sages came to see Bhīṣma, resembling Bṛhaspati in intelligence, Indra in valour, and lying on the bed of arrows. (The sages were:) Atri, Vasiṣṭha, Bhṛgu, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Aṅgiras, Gautama, Agastya, and Sumati, the wise one; Viśvāmitra, the omniscient Sthūlaśiras, the chief of the Pramathas, Raibhya, Bṛhaspati, Vyāsa, Pavana, Kaśyapa, Dhruva, Durvāsas, Jamadagni, Mārkaṇḍeya, Gālava, Uśanas, Bhāradvāja, Kratu and Āstīka also, Sthūlākṣa, Sarvalokākṣa, Kaṇva, Medhātithi, Kuśa, Nārada, Parvata, Sudhanvā and the brāhmaṇa, Cyavana, Matibhū, Bhuvana, Dhaumya, Śatānanda, Kṛtavraṇa, Jāmadagnya Rāma, Ṛcīka and others. Dharma's

son, along with his younger brothers duly saluted him, and duly honoured them, venerable to the world. The noble ones, with penance as their treasure, when honoured, were seated comfortably, and had talks about Bhīṣma and divine way of life. At the end of the talks of the sages of purified souls, Yudhiṣṭhira, having saluted Bhīṣma by (bowing) his head, asked this:

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

12. O grandsire, tell me which countries are very holy, which mountains and hermitages should always be resorted to by those who seek religious merit.

Bhīṣma said:

13-23. In this matter only they relate the history—the dialogue between (Śibi) gleaning ears of corn and a siddha, O king Yudhiṣṭhira. A siddha having walked about this entire earth, reached the house of the noble Śibi, (living by) gleaning ears of corn. He knew the essence of metaphysics; he had always curbed his senses. He had given up attachment and hatred, and was proficient in wise acts. He was always the best among the devotees of Viṣṇu. He was very much devoted to holy acts about Viṣṇu. He did not censure Viṣṇu's devotees. He was always devoted to righteousness. He was always engaged in yogic practices. He wore (the marks of) a conch and a disc. He knew the truth of worshipping the deity three times a day, and he was always devoted to Viṣṇu. He deliberated about what is right and what is wrong with those learned in Vedic lores. He always recited the Vedas; and always honoured (his) guests. Thinking of (visiting) a holy place, he always subsisted on gleaned corn. That brāhmaṇa having the form of Viṣṇu, knew all that was reflected upon and sung by the self-born one. He was proficient in the significance of various ways of life, and was always inclined to the Immutable. Once he went to Śibi's house. The noble-minded (Śibi) seeing him, offered him due hospitality. (Then) Śibi asked him the cause of the auspiciousness of the regions. (Śibi) who gleaned ears of corn, said: "O best brāhmaṇa, please tell me affectionately (i.e.

due to your affection for me), which countries, regions, mountains, and hermitages are auspicious."

The siddha said:

24-42. Those countries, regions, mountains, and hermitages in which the best river Gaṅgā is always present, are auspicious. That good position (i.e. obtaining heaven) which one would get by resorting to Gaṅgā is not obtained by penance, celibacy, sacrifice and gifts. That pleasure which is had by those self-governed people bathing in Gaṅgā, is not had by means of hundreds of sacrifices. A man swimming (i.e. bathing) in the water of Gaṅgā shines after removing his sins, as the sun shines at his rise by dispelling darkness. O brāhmaṇa, as a heap of cotton having reached (i.e. come in contact with) fire perishes, similarly a dip in Gaṅgā removes all sins. He who would drink the Gaṅgā-water heated by the sun's rays, is equivalent to one free from mist and is superior to fire. The man who has bathed in Gaṅgā is superior to the man who has observed the Cāndrāyaṇa vow standing on one foot. The best man who uses the Gaṅgā-water for a month (is superior to) the man who stands with his head down for a myriad years. Being free from (the sin of) a brāhmaṇa's murder he goes to Viṣṇu's (position). This Gaṅgā destroys sins like the confluence of Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī. By merely remembering her, the killer of an infant is freed in a moment. That Prayāga, the lord of the holy places, is difficult to be secured by the devotees of Viṣṇu. Having bathed there a man would quickly go to Vaikuṇṭha. He does not know (i.e. care for) what is dear and what is not dear. He does not obtain religious merit or sin. Having bathed in Gaṅgā, one is freed from a great sin. He who would say 'Gaṅgā, Gaṅgā' even from hundreds of yojanas (away from Gaṅgā), is free from all sins and goes to Viṣṇu's world. A killer of a brāhmaṇa, of a cow, a drunkard, a killer of an infant is free from all sins and quickly goes to heaven. He also sees excellent Viṣṇu. He who bathes at the confluence of Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī goes to Vaikuṇṭha. As darkness vanishes when the sun rises, in the same way sins perish just by bathing in her. By bathing at

Gaṅgāvarta, Kuśāvarta, Gallika, Nīlaparvata, at the holy place of Kanakhala, there is no birth. O king, the best man, knowing like this, and repeatedly bathing in Gaṅgā, is freed from sin. Viṣṇu is always the best among gods, horse-sacrifice among sacrifices, Aśvattha among all trees, similarly Gaṅgā is always (the best among rivers).

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PADMA-PURĀṆA

PART VIII

TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The purest gems lie hidden in the bottom of the ocean or in the depth of rocks. One has to dive into the ocean or delve into the rocks to find them out. Similarly, truth lies concealed in the language which with the passage of time has become obsolete. Man has to learn that language before he discovers that truth.

But he has neither the means nor the leisure to embark on that course. We have, therefore, planned to help him acquire knowledge by an easier course. We have started the series of Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology in English Translation. Our goal is to universalize knowledge through the most popular international medium of expression. The publication of the Purāṇas in English Translation is a step towards that goal.

Acknowledgements

It is our pleasant duty to put on record our sincere thanks to Dr. R.N. Dandekar and the UNESCO authorities for their kind encouragement and valuable help in the publication of the volumes in this series.

EDITORIAL

We are happy to add one more to the already published forty-five volumes of the AITM series. The present one, being the eighth part of the Padma Purāṇa in English translation, comprises chapters 82-184 of the sixth, Uttarakhaṇḍa, Section which is big enough to occupy the next part and part of the tenth and last one.

As an analysis of the contents reveals, out of the 103 chapters of the Uttarakhaṇḍa included here as many as 42 deal with the Holy Places of the Jambū Dvīpa, highlighting their efficacy, with the help of illustrative stories, in the riddance of both major and minor sins, not only of a person who actually visits them with faith and takes a holy bath there but also of his forefathers of a varying number of previous generations. The reader will notice that each and every such place is praised as if it were the holiest of holy places—a tendency akin to what Max Müller has termed 'henotheism' in the case of the Vedic gods.

Next comes the devotion to god Viṣṇu, to which about 30 chapters are devoted narrating the various celebrations, festivals, rites, vows and modes of worship to be performed to propitiate the god. Devotion to Viṣṇu is said to be of three kinds, viz. Sāttvika, Rājasa and Tāmasa. In Sāttvikī Bhakti, which is the best of the three, the devotee merges his heart in Him, dedicates himself to Him, practices compassion and is always intent upon duties sacred to Viṣṇu; he worships the Lord three times a day and subsists on fruits, roots and water, and imprints his body with marks of a conch and a disc. Ths second type, i.e. Rājasī Bhakti, is the one motivated by a desire to get objects of sensuous enjoyment, glory and affluence. The Tāmasī Bhakti which is the most inferior of the three types, is characterized by egoism, hypocrisy, deceit and destructiveness. In the practice of meditation and devotion the deity with a form is preferred to a formless one, and this may be treated as an argument in favour of idol-worship. The Purāṇa argues: "How can a man go along a

vacant path without a support?...The one (Lord) having a form is easily seen. The formless one is not seen. There is pleasure of service of the one having a form; no (such) pleasure in the case of serving a formless one" (ch. 132).

One of these chapters (ch. 90) contains the story of a demon Śaṅkha who, attributing the invincible power of gods to their possession of the Vedic hymns, snatches the Vedas from Satyaloka when Viṣṇu was asleep, how he was killed by the Lord assuming the form of a big fish and then how the Vedas were recovered from waters by the sages at the behest of the Lord. Several things are indicated by this mythical account, viz. mainly that though Brahmā, the god residing in the highest Satyaloka is the custodian of the Vedas, the real keeper of a vigil and the protector of them is Lord Viṣṇu; and that the sages who recovered the different portions of the Veda from water are the seers of their respective portions, not their authors. This account most probably points to the historical fact that the Vedas were at some time not known to recorded history thrown by some foreign invaders from across the seas into the sea and were later recoveredand restored to their original shape by some brāhmaṇa sages. It may as well be surmised that in some remote antiquity a master copy of the Vedas was kept in the custody of a super-priest of Brahmā category, and was stolen by some heretics, but was fortunately recovered in time, and then started the practice of committing the Vedas to memory and passing them on through oral tradition only for security reasons.

Incidentally, chapter 88 of this part reiterates that Lord Kṛṣṇa had sixteen thousand wives, and recommends the gift of Tulāpuruṣa (articles equal to the weight of a person) for obtaining a husband like Kṛṣṇa from birth to birth.

The last ten chapters of this part praise the first ten chapters of the Gītā and show how a recitation of each wholly or partly, intentionally or accidentally elevates a wretch to the highest spiritual position. While praising chapter sixth for its efficacy the famous Chāndogya story of king Jānaśruti and sage Raikva is reproduced with a slight variation in these names making them Jñānaśruti and Raikya respectively.

Next comes the story of Jalandhara which has already been narrated in detail in chapters 3-18 of this Khaṇḍa (vide Pd. P.,

Part VII). Here it, very strangely, reappears in nine chapters, viz. 96-104 without any new feature at all. We have already hinted at the multiple authorship of this Purāṇa in our Preface to Part VII and may only add here that it was a sensless act on the part of the author of this repetition.

Lastly, one long chapter (122) is devoted to the details of Dīpāvalī celebration, which gives a sort of religious sanction to the practice of gambling during the festival. It is said that Pārvatī defeated Śiva in the game of dice and sent him away naked, and further that he who gets victory first (in gambling) passes the whole year happily.

Some more observations of the Purāṇa may be noted here:

In chapter 112 it has been stated that religious merit or sin of one person can pass to another person through contact, e.g. due to being paired together, going together, eating from the same pot etc., followed by a long list of what fraction of it passes under what circumstances. The arithmatic involved here, if not arbitrary, would pose a serious juridical problem for one wishing to find a rational basis for the calculation.

The Purāṇa has introduced two technical terms in chapter 114, viz. *śuṣka* for non-deliberate sin and *ārdra* for a deliberate one, and two more in chapter 132, viz. *śukla dravya* for money earned through performance of one's duty, which is equivalent to the current term 'white money' earned through rightful means, and, by implication, *kṛṣṇa dravya* for 'black money'.

In chapter 117 it has been declared that one having no faith, a sinful person, an atheist, one with a split mind and a disputant —these five do not get the benefit of a visit to a holy place.

At the time when this Purāṇa was composed very early marriage was in vogue, as is indicated by the injunction of the Purāṇa (vide ch. 118) that a man should marry his daughter before she has attained puberty, with this further remark that wise men recommend a girl's marriage when she is eight years old.

Finally, the Purāṇa (ch. 126) gives a list of a few apparently good practices which become worthless under certain circumstances: e.g. religious practices accompanied by hypocrisy are worthless; penance becomes worthless by anger; knowledge without practical application is worthless; a gift given to a brāhmaṇa who is not learned in worthless, etc. —G. P. Bhatt

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ABBREVIATIONS

Common and self-evident abbreviations such as Ch(s)—Chapter(s), p—page, pp—pages, v—verse, vv—verses, Ftn—Footnote, Hist. Ind. Philo.—History of Indian Philosophy are not included in this list.

ABORI	*Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Poona
AGP	S.M. Ali's *The Geography of Purāṇas*, PPH, New Delhi, 1973
AIHT	*Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, F. E. Pargiter, Motilal Banarsidass (MLBD), Delhi
AITM	*Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology* Series, MLBD, Delhi
AP	*Agni Purāṇa*, Guru Mandal Edition (GM), Calcutta, 1957
Arch.S.Rep.	Archaeological Survey Report
AV	*Atharva Veda*, Svādhyāya Maṇḍal, Aundh
Bd. P.	*Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, MLBD, Delhi 1973
BG	*Bhagavadgītā*
Bh. P.	*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Bhagavat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad
Br.	*Brāhmaṇa* (preceded by name such as Śatapatha)
BS. P.	*Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*, Vishnu Shastri Bapat, Wai
BV. P.	*Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*, GM, 1955-57
CC	*Caturvarga Cintāmaṇi* by Hemādri
CVS	*Caraṇa Vyūha Sūtra* by Śaunaka, Com. by Mahīdāsa
DB	*Devī Bhagavata*, GM, 1960-61
De or GDAMI	*The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval India*, N.L. De, Oriental Reprint, Delhi, 1971
Dh. S.	*Dharma Sūtra* (preceded by the author's name such as Gautama)
ERE	*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* by Hastings
GP	*Garuḍa Purāṇa*, ed. R. S. Bhattacharya, Chowkhamba, Varanasi, 1964

GS	*Gṛhya Sūtra* (preceded by the name of the author such as Āpastamba)
HD	*History of Dharma Śāstra*, P.V. Kane, G. O. S.
IA	*The Indian Antiquary*
IHQ	*The Indian Historical Quarterly*
JP	*Purāṇa* (Journal of the Kashiraj Trust), Varanasi
KA	*Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra*
KP	*Kūrma Purāṇa*, Veṅkaṭeśvara Press Edn., Bombay; also Kashiraj Trust Edn., Varanasi, 1971
LP	*Liṅga Purāṇa*, GM, 1960; also MLBD, Delhi, 1981
Manu.	*Manusmṛti*
Mbh.	*Mahābhārata*, Gītā Press, Gorakhpur, VS 2014
MkP	*Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*
MN	*Mahābhārata Nāmānukramaṇī*, Gītā Press, Gorakhpur, VS 2016
MtP	*Matsya Purāṇa*, GM, 1954
MW	Monier Williams' *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, MLBD, Delhi, 1976
NP	*Nāradīya* or *Nārada Purāṇa*, Veṅkaṭeśvara Press, Bombay
PCK	*Bhāratavarṣīya Prācīna Caritrakośa*, Siddheshwar Shastri, Poona, 1968
Pd. P.	*Padma Purāṇa*, GM, 1957-59
PE	*Purāṇic Encyclopaedia*, V. Mani, English version, MLBD, Delhi, 1975
PR or PRHRC	*Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, R. C. Hazra, Calcutta, 1948
ṚV	*Ṛg-Veda*, Svādhyāya Maṇḍal, Aundh
Śat. Br.	*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*
SC or SMC	*Smṛti Candrikā* by Devanna Bhaṭṭa
SEP	*Studies in Epics and Purāṇas*, A.D. Pusalkar, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (BVB), Bombay

CHAPTER EIGHTYTWO

The Greatness of Viṣṇu's Devotees

Pārvatī said:

1. O lord of the universe, O master, tell what are said to be the characteristics of Viṣṇu's devotees, and what is their importance.

Mahādeva said:

2-9. Since he belongs to Viṣṇu, he is looked upon as a follower (or devotee) of Viṣṇu. Brahmā should be known as the source of all and as one who has taken up a form. From him brāhmaṇas, masters of the Vedas, are born. They should be known as Viṣṇu's devotees and never the others. He who possesses purity, truth, forgiveness, who is free from attachment and hatred, who knows the ideas contained in the Vedic lore, is known as a devotee of Viṣṇu. He who is always engaged in keeping the sacred fire, who always honours his guests, who is devoted to his father and mother, is called a devotee of Viṣṇu. He who is having the virtue of compassion, who is averse to sins, who is marked with a conch and a disc, is called Viṣṇu's devotee. He who wears a garland round his neck, who always utters (the name of) Rāma with his mouth, who would always devotedly sing (Viṣṇu's praise), is said to be Viṣṇu's devotee. Those men who are always devoted to the Purāṇas, who are always engaged in (performing) sacrifices, should be known to be Viṣṇu's devotees, and are dear to all sects. Those sinful men who censure them, repeatedly go to (i.e. are born in) bad stocks after their death.

10-17. Those brāhmaṇas who always honour the image named Gopāla, fashioning it from a metal only with four hands, and well decorated, worship it, are known to enjoy religious merit. Those brāhmaṇas who after having fashioned an image (of Viṣṇu) from stone and called Kṛṣṇa and beautiful in form, worship it, should be known to be of meritorious forms. Where there is the Śālagrāma stone, where there is the stone from Dvārakā, or where there is the combination of these two, there is salvation. There is no doubt about this. If after install-

ing the image with (i.e. to the accompaniment of) a hymn, one worships it, then that worship gives a crorefold merit. It leads to religious merit, acquisition of worldly prosperity, satisfaction of sensual desires and salvation. Devotion of nine kinds[1] should be shown for Viṣṇu. Therefore, you should make the image of stone or metal. Devotees should meditate upon it and worship it. A devotee should offer to the image worship with kingly attendance. One should always remember lord Viṣṇu, the soul of all, the only refuge of the helpless and the poor, and the cause of the existence of the worlds. One should always remember (Viṣṇu), destroyer of great sins, (as present) in that image and say 'This is Gopāla, so also Kṛṣṇa, and Rāma.'

18-30. He who worships (the lord) properly, is a man of the lord. The best men, the followers of Viṣṇu, should fashion the form (of the image) like that as was taken up by Keśava (i.e. Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu) in Gokula. A wise man should fashion his form for self-gratification. By (doing) this, ample devotion is produced. There is no doubt about this. In that image should be fashioned especially a conch, a disc, a mace and (other) weapons of Viṣṇu according to (proper) measure. One should get fashioned an image having four arms, two eyes, holding a conch, a disc and a mace, wearing a yellow garment, beautiful, very large, wearing a garland of wood-flowers, and with bright ear-rings of lapis lazuli, having gems on the crown, and always shining with Kaustubha. (It should be) of gold, silver, copper or brass. (He should) get it installed especially by best brāhmaṇas with Vedic hymns as given in the sacred texts. After that it should be worshipped according to the (injunctions in) holy texts. The worship should be duly offered with hymns and in sixteen ways[2] of doing homage. When Viṣṇu is worshipped, all deities are worshipped. Therefore, the great lord should be worshipped in this way. The god without beginning and end,

1. Navadhā Bhakti—Listening to the praise of Viṣṇu, narration of his virtues, remembering him, serving his feet, worshipping him, saluting him, servitude to him, his friendship, and offering oneself to him.

2. Ṣoḍaśopacāra—Sixteen ways of doing homage to a deity etc: Offering a seat, reception, offering water for washing feet, for rinsing the month, respectful offering, giving water for sipping, madhuparka, bath, garments, ornaments, sandal, flowers, incense, lamp, eatables, salutation.

holding a conch, a disc, a mace, and the lord of all gives everything to his followers, of the nature of merit. As is Viṣṇu, so is Śiva. There is absolutely no difference between the two. O goddess, knowing like this, the fashioning of the images of both should be done. There is no doubt that he who worships Śiva and is given to censuring Viṣṇu, lives in the Raurava hell. I am Viṣṇu, I am Rudra, I am Brahmā, the grandsire. I repeatedly and constantly live in all beings.

Pārvatī said:

31. O Maheśvara, tell me properly about the characteristics of those who are said to be the servants and followers and devotees of Viṣṇu?

Mahādeva said:

32-39. Śūdras are his servants, Nārada and others are his followers, and O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, Prahlāda, Ambarīṣa and others are his devotees. He who is always engaged in a rite in honour of the Supreme Being, who recites the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas, and has the marks of a conch and a disc is said to be a Vaiṣṇava. That śūdra who is always engaged in serving brāhmaṇas, who always worships Viṣṇu, and listens generally to the Purāṇas that are acceptable to the Vedas, is said to be Viṣṇu's servant, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain. He who resorts to (i.e. looks upon himself as a child of) five years and is devoted in many ways, is called Viṣṇu's devotee, and is approved of among (i.e. by) all good men. O you beautiful young lady, Dhruva and others, so also Ambarīṣa and others are said to be devotees of all times by the sages. In the Kali age śūdras very much devoted to meditation on Viṣṇu, are most blessed. They enjoy happiness in this world, and go to the eternal (position) of Viṣṇu. That śūdra who has the marks of a conch and a disc, and who is devoted to Viṣṇu, and who celebrates especially the four festivals, is the servant of Viṣṇu, as it is seen and heard.

CHAPTER EIGHTYTHREE

The Swing Festival

Pārvatī said:

1-3. O Maheśvara, tell me about the rites (performed) in all months. A great festival is to be celebrated (in these months). Which is the accepted manner (in which the festival is to be celebrated)? O lord of gods, tell me which the deity is who is to be worshipped, what his greatness would be, and on which day (of the month) it is to be performed. What is told to the devotees of Viṣṇu of meritorious deeds about the month? I am blessed, I am fortunate, I am lucky on the earth, that I (shall) hear the story of Viṣṇu (from you) by seeing you and coming in your contact.

Śiva said:

4-18. I shall, O sinless one, tell you the mode of the festivals, hearing which you will be delighted as by songs and musical instruments. First, especially on the Ekādaśī of the bright fortnight of the very auspicious month of Caitra one should worship (Viṣṇu) mounted on a swing. O goddess, one should always devoutly celebrate the festival according to the rule. They (who) see Kṛṣṇa, remover of the blemishes of the Kali age, mounted upon the swing, are, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, free from thousands of offences. The sins committed during crores of existences remain as long as one would not swing god (Viṣṇu), the lord of the universe, the master of the universe. Those who in the Kali age see Janārdana mounted upon the swing, are freed even though (they have committed) the sin of killing a cow. What then can be said about others? Gods, along with Rudra, being delighted at the swing festival, jubilantly dance, sing, and play upon musical instruments in the courtyard. Sages, the attendants of Śiva, gandharvas, the groups of the celestial nymphs like Rambhā, so also the serpents led by Vāsuki, so also deities and chief gods, desiring to see Viṣṇu come to the swing (festival). On the swing (festival) day in the vernal season beings are present for (i.e. at the time of) the swing festival, and O great goddess, those

belonging to a heavenly stock also certainly go (there) when (the image of) Kṛṣṇa is (placed) on the swing. Seeing Viṣṇu on the swing, there is a festival for the three worlds. Therefore, giving up a hundred other occupations celebrate a festival on the swing (festival) day. Prahlāda comes there. Viṣṇu mounts on the swing, O great goddess. Remembering him who grants a boon (one should celebrate the festival). Those who keep awake (on that night) remembering Kṛṣṇa on the swing, receive the fruit of all their religious merit in a moment. Those who see Viṣṇu on the swing in the spring, being saluted by the god of gods, play with Viṣṇu. One seeing (the image of) the god facing the south and mounted on the swing, O goddess, is free from (the sin of) the murder of a brāhmaṇa on seeing Viṣṇu (just) once. 'Om, we know the god mounted on the swing. We think of Mādhava. May that god urge us on'. This is the worship with the Gāyatrī (hymn).

19-34. 'Repeated salutations to Mādhava, Govinda, Śrī-kaṇṭha'. The worship should be done to the accompaniment of the hymn and according to the rule. Being composed he should give a gift to his preceptor according to his capacity. He should devoutly sing (the praise) of Viṣṇu; then the (worship) will be complete. O you beautiful lady, what is the use of repeatedly saying other things? Viṣṇu remaining on the swing removes all sins. He, worshipped properly by men, always gives everything. Where (Viṣṇu) remains on the swing, gods, and kinnaras with gandharvas come there. There is no doubt about this. There he should worship Viṣṇu with the hymn, *Om, Namo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya* ('Om, Salutation to the lord Vāsudeva'). With this hymn he should worship (Viṣṇu). He should do the worship according to the rule and in sixteen ways of doing homage (to Viṣṇu). All his desires for virtue, material welfare etc. would certainly get fulfilled. O you of a good vow, all that like the assignment of (the various parts of) the body, hand etc., should be done with (i.e. to the accompaniment) of this hymn. The festival should be celebrated with the hymn as told in the holy text. He should keep (the image of) the deity (Viṣṇu) along with Lakṣmī on the swing. In front of (the image of) the deity he should install (the images of) Nārada etc.—the divine sages. So also the devotees like Viśvaksena should always be installed in

the front. The wise one should wave the light with the sound of five musical instruments. O goddess, in every watch he should be carefully worshipped. He should offer him respectful offering with coconuts and white banana plants. He should be carefully worshipped, O goddess. 'O god of gods, O lord of the world, O holder of a conch, a disc and a mace, accept the worship. Favour me.' The remnants of the offering should be given to Viṣṇu's devotees. The devotees of Viṣṇu should play upon musical instruments and dance there. Then especially the swinging (of the swing) should be done. O goddess, all the holy and sacred places that are there on the earth, come there to witness (the festival) on that day. Knowing like this, O goddess, the great festival should be celebrated. O you daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, śūdras and all other castes should be looked upon to be holding a conch, a disc, a mace.

CHAPTER EIGHTYFOUR

The Damanaka Festival

Mahādeva said:

1-19. In this month of Caitra itself, the Damanaka festival should be celebrated; and especially on the twelfth day the rite should be properly performed. (This festival) meritorious and enhancing the joy of the people, should be devoutly celebrated by the devotees of Viṣṇu. The blossom of Damanaka that has originated from the joy of gods should be offered by the devotees, the followers of Viṣṇu, desiring the fruit of the entire worship on the twelfth day of the bright half of Caitra, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain. With the mind fixed on the great festival a man should celebrate it with great devotion. O you sinless one, having first gone to a grove, (a man) should worship (the deity) with Rati, according to the preceptor's order (saying), 'Salutation to you, O Kāmadeva, deluding all. I shall look out (for you) for Viṣṇu. (Please) favour me.' He (i.e. his image)

should be brought home to the accompaniment of the sounds of singing and musical instruments. O best among the gods, Viṣṇu's devotees should devoutly worship him at night after preliminary consecration of his image at night. Then before him (i.e. his image) an auspicious circle should be drawn all round. Then he should install him there with Rati. The wise one should (then) cover the image with a white (piece of) cloth; and should place damanaka. The best brāhmaṇas, the devotees of Viṣṇu, should perform the worship there only. 'Klīṁ, salutation to Kāmadeva. Hrīṁ, salutation to Rati also.' A wise man, after installing (the image of) Kandarpa in the quarter of Indra (i.e. the east), should worship (the image). O chief among gods, at night offering of sandal, flowers, so also incense, lamp, waving of lights should be devoutly and in the proper manner done. (Saying) 'Salutation to Madana' (he should) worship in the east. (Saying) 'Salutation to Manmatha' (he should) worship in the south-east. (Saying) 'Salutation to Kandarpa' (he should worship) in the south. (Saying) 'Salutation to Anaṅga' (he should worship) in the rakṣa (i.e. the south-west) direction. (Saying) 'Salutation to him whose body was reduced to ash' (he should worship) in the west. (Saying) 'Salutation to Smara' (he should worship) in the north-east. (Saying) 'Salutation to Īśvara' (he should worship) in the north. (Saying) 'Salutation to Puṣpa-bāṇa' (i.e. having arrows of flowers) (he should worship) in the north-east. In all the four directions he should worship (the image of) him. Then worshipping damanaka with sacred rice grains, incense, lamps, offerings of eatables, tāmbūlas, he should salute damanaka after consecrating it with the recitation done one hundred and eight times of the Kāma-Gāyatrī (hymn): 'We know that Puruṣa, Kāmadeva. We reflect on him. May that Anaṅga urge us on'. (Then he should say:) 'Salutation to Puṣpabāṇa giving joy to the world; (salutation) to Manmatha, the eye of the world, and to him who delights Rati. Salutation to you, O god of gods. O Śrī Viśveśa (i.e. the lord of the universe), salutation to you. Salutation to you, O lord of Rati; salutation to you, O ornament of the universe. O lord of the world, salutation to you. Salutation to you, O origin of everything.' With such various types of hymns, especially with those that are told in the sacred texts, Janārdana, along with Lakṣmī, should be carefully worshipped. Then the

wise (man) should report the act (to the lord), and keep awake. (He should say), 'O god of gods, O lord of the world, O you who give the desired objects, O you dear to Kāmeśvarī, O Viṣṇu, fulfil the desire in my heart'. Śrīnivāsa, Jagannātha (i.e. Viṣṇu) who desires the good of his devotees, should be carefully worshipped with many such hymns. He should offer damanaka to deities like Lakṣmī and Viṣṇu. Then (he should offer) a great worship with incense etc. And a great festival should be celebrated with songs, musical instruments, dancing etc. A pitcher is placed before the deity. Having poured water from the pitcher on the feet of the deity, he should have water-sport on that day. Then he should devoutly worship his preceptor with garments, ornaments and money. Then he should eat along with his kinsmen —the devotees of Viṣṇu.

Mahādeva said:

20-31. Then he should worship Viṣṇu with damanaka-sprouts. When Viṣṇu is worshipped, I am always worshipped. O goddess, on seeing the damanaka festival, he who has killed a brāhmaṇa, or snatched away gold, or is a drunkard, or eats flesh, is freed from the sin. O goddess, those good devotees of Viṣṇu who have worshipped the deity with damanaka, with damanaka-sprout, have visited all the sacred places. He who has worshipped Viṣṇu with a (damanaka-)sprout, has studied the Vedas, all holy texts, and maintained the sacred fire. His family—whether of a brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, śūdra or (of) any other (caste)—is lucky, is said to be very lucky. Being born in a family in which the damanaka festival is celebrated, is blessed. So also he who has worshipped Viṣṇu. O goddess, having worshipped (Viṣṇu) with damanaka when spring has arrived, he gets the fruit of the gift of a thousand cows. He who would with great devotion worship Viṣṇu with jasmine flowers in the spring, would obtain salvation. Maruka and damanaka instantly pleased Viṣṇu. Therefore, the best men, Viṣṇu's devotees, should worship (Viṣṇu with these). When he has worshipped Viṣṇu, he has made (a gift of) a thousand cows, has given his daughter (in marriage to a worthy groom), has given the gift of the earth. Of him who, having taken but one damanaka-sprout, worships the lord of gods when spring has come, O daughter

of the (Himālaya) Mountain, I do not know the measure of his religious merit. He having four arms enjoys the fruits of merit, worldly objects, sensual desires here (i.e. in this world) and in the next world, and enjoys Viṣṇu's position.

CHAPTER EIGHTYFIVE

The Śayana Festival of Viṣṇu

Mahādeva said:

1-11. A devotee of Viṣṇu should devoutly and with joy worship and celebrate the festival of the lord of the world lying in water on the full-moon day of Vaiśākha. Having had songs, (having played upon) musical instruments, having danced and celebrated the auspicious great festival, he should, being delighted, see the best god on the Ekādaśī (day). Devoutly singing a song in praise of Viṣṇu, he should celebrate the auspicious festival. 'O lord of gods, lie in this water. When, O lord of gods, you are asleep, the world also is asleep.' On the advent of the rainy season, those men who put Viṣṇu in water, have no torment in hell, O best goddess. The bed called Viṣṇu, should be made in a golden vessel, or a silver vessel, or a copper vessel, O best goddess. Or it should be made in an earthen vessel. Having put there cold water made fragrant, the wise man should install in that water (the image of) Viṣṇu. The image should have the name of Gopāla or of Rāma. Or especially a Śālagrāma stone should be installed. Or an image of that stone (should be put). Its merit is unending. As long as the earth, the people on it, the moon and the sun are there, no one in his family would be a hellish being. Therefore, O great goddess, he should worship Viṣṇu in water. The man, free from torment, would exist till the final deluge. During the time of Jyeṣṭha and Āṣāḍha he should worship Viṣṇu covered with a Tulasī leaf in very cold water.

12-20. Those who worship Viṣṇu remaining in water with various flowers during the time of Jyeṣṭha and Āṣāḍha, are free

from Yama's torment. As water is most dear to Viṣṇu, as he lies in water, as he likes water, so, especially in summer, (a man) should worship Viṣṇu remaining in water. He who, after making the image of Śālagrāma stone of the deity lie in water, has worshipped it, would emancipate his family. He, O beautiful one, who has devoutly worshipped Viṣṇu in water when the Sun is in Cancer (the fourth sign of the Zodiac), or especially when he is in Gemini (the third sign of the Zodiac), and he who has offered worship to the lord remaining and lying in water, has performed crores of hundreds of sacrifices. Those men who in the month called Mādhava (i.e. Vaiśākha) worship (the image of) Viṣṇu after putting it in water are gods on the earth. He who having prepared (the mixture of) sandal and water in a pot, would put (into it the image of) Viṣṇu, and worship it at night on Dvādaśī, would get salvation. These five—one who has no faith, one of a sinful mind, an atheist, one whose doubt has not been removed, and one who acts from a (selfish) motive—do not enjoy the fruit of the worship. In the same way, O great goddess, a man who everyday worships the lord of the world while he is in water, is freed from great sins.

21-30. O chief goddess, the worship to him is said to be offered with (i.e. to the accompaniment of) the hymn, 'Om, Hrīṁ, Hrīṁ, salutation to Rāma. Om, Klīṁ, salutation to Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, dear to the cowherdesses'. With this hymn, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, he should consecrate the water. (He should say:) 'O god of gods, O noble one, O you having the mark of Śrīvatsa, O great god, salutation to you. O cause of the world, salutation to you. O god, accept the respectful offering and always give me salvation'. With flowers of various kinds he should worship Viṣṇu. Free from all troubles he would be absorbed into Viṣṇu. Being very much concentrated he should keep awake on Dvādaśī. He should devoutly worship the immutable and inexhaustible god, Viṣṇu. Those who are intent on devotion and desire devotion should celebrate the festival called Viṣṇu(-festival) in the month of Vaiśākha. He should perform the rites in it as told in the holy texts. When this is done, O great goddess, it is equal to the fruit of a crore of sacrifices. He being free from attachment and hatred and turning away great delusion, goes to the eternal (position) of Viṣṇu

after having enjoyed happiness in the world. A brāhmaṇa who on the earth devoutly celebrates (this) festival, gets free from sins, and certainly goes to Vaikuṇṭha. A man deprived of Vedic studies and without the study of holy texts gets Viṣṇu's position on having devotion for Viṣṇu. He would be delighted in self, would always be free, and would have conquered his self. He goes to Viṣṇu's position (and remains there) as long as the Moon and the Sun (exist).

CHAPTER EIGHTYSIX

The Investiture of the Sacred Thread

Mahādeva said:

1-19. When the month of Śrāvaṇa comes the rite of the investiture of the sacred thread should be performed, having done which divine devotion is produced. O Pārvatī, the wise ones should perform, with faith, Viṣṇu's investiture of the sacred thread. (By doing that) his worship in the rainy season becomes complete. On Viṣṇu's investiture of the sacred thread one gets pleasure. One would get various pleasures on having always properly worshipped Viṣṇu. Having brought a thread, a garment spun by a brāhmaṇa woman (he should do the rite). Or he should use there (i.e. for this rite) thread spun by himself. Or similarly he should get a thread spun by a good śūdra woman. Or he should properly have one through sale. The rite of the investiture (of the thread) should be done with silken cloth only. So also (the sacred thread for) god Viṣṇu should be made of silver. Or, O chief goddess, it should be especially made of gold according to the rule. In the absence of all metals the wise ones should take (a cotton) thread. The thread reaching the feet is said to be the best. The one up to the knees (is said to be) middling. The one reaching the navel (is said to be) inferior. A wise one should have the investiture (of any one of these threads). The thread should have the knots numbering the days of the year, or half the number, or one hundred and eight. O

Pārvatī, it is also proper (to have one) having half the number. On the phallus it is known as liṅga, and should be accompanied by Gaṅgā and the serpents. O goddess, on the image the sacred thread should be of wood flowers. It should be prepared beautifully, by which Viṣṇu is pleased. One good sacred thread called *gandha* should always be prepared by men, Viṣṇu's devotees, and it should have only one strand. In the same way the thread sacred to the deity Viṣṇu is also said to be (so) for the gods. So also (for) the devotees like Ambarīṣa and Dhruva. Then, O Pārvatī, sacred threads should be offered here (i.e. in this rite). The first day is recommended for investiture with the sacred thread of Kubera. The second is said to be the best of days for goddess Lakṣmī. The third for you, and the fourth for Gajānana. The fifth is for the Moon, and the sixth for Kārtikeya. The seventh is said (i.e. recommended) for the Sun; for Durgā the eighth is told, the ninth for the divine mothers and similarly the tenth is (recommended) for Yama. The eleventh is (recommended) for all (deities), and the twelfth for Viṣṇu. The thirteenth is for Madana, and the fourteenth is said to be for Śarva. Similarly the fifteenth (day of the fortnight) is recommended for Brahmā's worship.

20-27. These are said to be the proper days of investiture with the sacred thread. Twelve is said to be inferior. Double (the number) is said to be middling; and thrice the number (i.e. thirtysix) is said to be the number of knots on the sacred thread. Have it dyed with camphor and saffron, sandal and turmeric. Having dyed all this, and having put it in a new casket, all those should be placed like a deity (at the place) where the worship of the deity (is to be performed). First, worship of the deity should be done. (Then) garment with the thread (should be put on). After the sacred thread is put on, the worship is said to be done. In the sacred threads the deities would be in proximity. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Rudra are the three deities of the sacred thread. Kriyā, Pauruṣī, Vīrā, the fourth (being) Aparājitā, Jayā and Vijayā, Muktidā, so also Sadāśivā, the ninth (is) Manonmanī, and the tenth Sarvatomukhī—these are the deities of the knots. He should install them on the threads. Then with (appropriate) finger position according to the rule of

the holy texts, he should invoke them. This is said to be properly placing them in proximity.

28-35. The placing in proximity is done by the finger position (called) *sannidhi-mudrā*. Then having protected them with (the finger position called) *rakṣā* (i.e. protection)-*mudrā* and having immortalised them with (the finger position called) *dhenu-mudrā* he should bring them before the deity. Taking water from the pitcher he should sprinkle them with hymns from the sacred texts. The sprinkling (should be done) with the hymn: 'Klīṁ, to Kṛṣṇa'. Then having offered sandal, incense, eatables, having given tāmbūla etc., having worshipped the deities of the sacred thread in the sixteen ways of doing homage, having incensed the fragrant sacred thread, and facing the deity he should consecrate it with (the finger position) called *namaskāra-mudrā* (i.e. mudrā of salutation): 'O Mahādeva, with the goddess and attendants etc. you are invited by means of these hymns. O lord Viṣṇu, come along with the regents of quarters and attendants for the fulfilment of the rite. In the morning we shall worship you. Be constantly in the proximity.' Having put in the morning that sandal and sacred thread at the feet of god Rāghava, Viṣṇu, and having performed his rite(s) and with the repetition three times of the words, 'This is an auspicious day' and with the preliminary religious rite and with words of victory and with the auspicious sounds of bells, musical instruments and of drums he should offer the worship. He should worship in the proper order: first the seniormost, then the middling and (lastly) the inferior. With the hymn 'We know Vāsudeva, we think of god Viṣṇu; may the god urge us on', or with his own hymns he should offer the great delightful worship, having offered which Viṣṇu, the soul, is pleased. All round illumination should be done according to the rule. The wise man should also get prepared four kinds of food. O beautiful one, then the sacred threads that are worshipped should be given (to brāhmaṇas). Then he should especially worship his teacher with devotion. The great preceptor should be worshipped with the rite (of offering) garments and ornaments. After having worshipped his preceptor he should wear the sacred thread. Then having given tāmbūlas to those who are Viṣṇu's devotees and a full oblation to Agni, he should report the act to Śrīnivāsa, Śrī

Kṛṣṇa. (He should say:) 'O Viṣṇu, may that (act of having) worshipped you without the (proper) hymns, the (proper) acts, and without devotion, be certainly well completed'. Then having called (his relatives) he should eat the cooked food with his dear relatives, Viṣṇu's devotees, and brāhmaṇas. Those best brāhmaṇas who listen to this divine worship are free from all sins and go to the highest position of Viṣṇu.

36-41. There is no doubt that as long as the Moon shines, the Sun shines, he who has investiture of the sacred thread shines like them. On having the investiture with the sacred thread all the gifts and restraints that there are on the earth, become perfect. This rite of the investiture of the sacred thread is the king of festivals. A killer of a brāhmaṇa is purified by it. No doubt should be raised about this. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, what is said is the truth, the (absolute) truth. The religious merit that is said (to result) from the investiture of the sacred thread is also said (to be had) from seeing it. O noble one, the śūdras who have devoutly performed this rite of the investiture of the sacred thread, are said to be most fortunate. I am lucky, I am blessed, I am fortunate, (as) the devotion I had for Viṣṇu, gives salvation.

CHAPTER EIGHTYSEVEN

Monthly Offering of Flowers to Viṣṇu

Maheśvara said:

1-13. In Caitra Viṣṇu who removes sufferings should be carefully worshipped with campaka or jasmine flowers. One should worship the lord of the worlds, the lord of the lords of all, viz. Viṣṇu, with damanaka, maruka, and bilva flowers. Or (one) being very calm, should (worship him) with divine, red lotuses. O chief goddess, men worship Viṣṇu in the month of Caitra. O goddess, and in Vaiśākha the great lord should always be worshipped. He who has devoutly worshipped Viṣṇu, taking (i.e. with) a ketakī-leaf, when the Sun is in the sign

Taurus of the Zodiac, is pleased for a hundred ages of Manu. When the month of Jyeṣṭha comes, he should worship (Viṣṇu) with various flowers. When the lord of gods is worshipped, all gods are worshipped well. They too, (even) after having committed thousands of (minor) sins and hundreds of major sins, will go there where Viṣṇu dwells with Lakṣmī. When the month of Āṣāḍha comes, they should especially worship (Viṣṇu). Those men who always worship Viṣṇu with (flowers of) karavīra, red flowers and lotuses, are meritorious. Those who will worship Viṣṇu with gold-like flowers and kadamba flowers, have no fear from (Śani) the Sun's son. Viṣṇu worshipped with kadamba flowers at the advent of the rainy season, gives desired objects as long as the fourteen Indras (last). Viṣṇu, the creator of the world, becomes as pleased on having kadamba flower(s) as by obtaining Lakṣmī. O best goddess, Viṣṇu worshipped with Tulasī, black Tulasī and aśoka flowers, always removes (the devotee's) affliction. (Viṣṇu is pleased with them) who worship him when the month of Śrāvaṇa comes with hemp-flower or dūrvā-blade.

14-27. He should especially be carefully worshipped with various flowers. He gives many desired objects till the final deluge. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, listen. When the month of Bhādrapada comes, he who worships Viṣṇu with campaka flowers, white flowers and red sindūra flowers, with white lotuses, O great goddess, would obtain the fruit of all his desires. In the auspicious month of Āśvina worship to Viṣṇu should be offered with jasmine flowers, so also with various kinds of flowers. (Viṣṇu) should be carefully and devoutly worshipped by all people. Those men who by bringing lotuses only worship Viṣṇu, obtain on the earth religious merit, worldly prosperity, sensual enjoyments and salvation. When the month of Kārtika comes, the great lord should be worshipped. As many seasonal flowers as are there should be offered to Viṣṇu. With sesamum and sesamum flowers he should offer worship. When the lord of gods is pleased, the man obtains unending fruit. Those who worship Viṣṇu in Kārtika with bakula flowers, punnāga and campaka flowers are gods, and not men. In Mārgaśīrṣa the lord should always be worshipped with various flowers, offerings of eatables, incense and waving lights. In

Mārgaśīrṣa he should worship Viṣṇu especially with divine flowers. O great goddess, in the month of Pauṣa good worship with various Tulasī leaves and water mixed with musk should be done, and when the month of Māgha has come, he should worship Viṣṇu with various flowers. When the supreme lord of the gods is worshipped, a man certainly gets his desired object. The worship should be done with camphor or various eatables like sweetmeats. When Phālguna comes, Viṣṇu's worship should be done. He should fully perform the vernal worship after bringing flowers, or, O chief goddess, he should worship him with new flowers. When the lord of the world is worshipped, a man gets the eternal position of Viṣṇu by Viṣṇu's favour.

CHAPTER EIGHTYEIGHT

Dialogue Between Satyabhāmā and Kṛṣṇa

Hereafter (the narration of) the importance of the month of Kārtika is commenced.

Sūta said:

1-17. Once the sage (Nārada) came taking with him divine flowers and (those) of the desire-yielding tree to Dvārakā to see Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa welcomed and honoured Nārada. Offering him a seat, he said: "This is a respectful offering; this is water for washing your feet." And Nārada offered those flowers to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa distributed them among (his) sixteen thousand wives. The lord, forgetting Satyabhāmā, gave them to all (other wives). Then getting angry Satyabhāmā entered the anger-chamber. Calm Kṛṣṇa knowing that went there and bringing Satyabhāmā, he mentally recollected Garuḍa. By merely being remembered, Garuḍa, coming there, stood before him. Having quickly mounted on the bird, the lord said to his dear (wife Satyabhāmā): "O Satyā, do not be angry; for you, opposing the lord of gods with the deities, I shall plant the desire-yielding tree in your courtyard. O noble

one, pardon my fault." Making a pledge like this with Satyabhāmā, he quickly went to the world of deities (i.e. heaven) where that god (Indra), the killer of Vṛtra, was. Being solicited for the desire-yielding tree, (Indra) replied to the lord: "O god, O lord, it is not proper for you to take this tree to the earth." Then the large-armed (Kṛṣṇa) took out the tree from (i.e. with) the root, and the very strong one put it on his vehicle (i.e. Garuḍa). Then the wielder of the thunderbolt (i.e. Indra), the strong (god), speedily raised the thunderbolt and struck Garuḍa (with it saying:) "Leave the desire-yielding tree". Then Garuḍa, to honour the thunderhold, dropped one feather. Due to that stroke of the thunderbolt, three birds (animals?) sprang up: the peacock, the mongoose and the blue jay. Kṛṣṇa went to Dvārakā. Having come, he planted it in Satyabhāmā's house. Then only Nārada came and was very much honoured by Satyā.

Satyabhāmā said:

(Please) tell me how I should get such a desire-yielding tree and such a husband as the lord in every existence.

Thus asked, Nārada, the best sage, then said: "O Satyabhāmā, he is obtained by means of the gift of tulāpuruṣa." Then Satyabhāmā having weighed Kṛṣṇa according to the precept in the holy text, gave (the articles equal to his weight) along with the desiring-yielding tree to Nārada. Taking all the articles, Nārada went to heaven.

Sūta said:

18. When Nārada had gone after bidding farewell to Kṛṣṇa, Satyā with her face blooming with joy said to Kṛṣṇa:

Satyabhāmā said:

19-25a. I am blessed; I am fortunate. My existence is fruitful. My parents who certainly produced me as the (most) favourite wife in the three worlds, are lucky in being the cause of my birth, as I am (most) dear to you among (your) sixteen thousand wives. (I am lucky) since I duly gave, according to the rite as told (in the holy text), (the articles equal to the weight of) the

lord of creation with the desire-yielding tree to Nārada. That desire-yielding tree whose account the beings on the earth perhaps know, now stands in my house(?). I am also very dear to Kṛṣṇa, the lord of the three worlds. Therefore, O Madhu-sūdana, I desire to ask you something. If you are my benefactor, then tell this in detail. Hearing that I shall again do what is beneficial to me, so that, O god, I shall never be separated from you till (the end of) the kalpa.

Sūta said:

25b-27. Hearing these words of his dear (wife), Kṛṣṇa, with a smile on his face, put his hand into that of Satyā, and went with pleasure to the foot of the desiring-yielding tree with his beloved after having forbidden his attendants (to follow them). Having laughed and called Satyā, the lord of the worlds with the hair on his body bristling and with horripilation spoke (to her) to please and delight her.

Kṛṣṇa said:

28-30. O dear one, out of my sixteen thousand wives no beautiful lady other than you is dear to me. You are (just) like my life. For you I had a quarrel with (Indra) the lord of gods along with the (other) deities. Listen, O dear one; (I shall give you) whatever is solicited by you, whether it is small or big, even if it cannot be (easily) given, done, or expressed. Then, O dear one, how shall I not tell (i.e. give the answer to) the question put by you? Ask everything that is in your mind. I shall tell (i.e. answer) it.

Satyā said:

31-33. Formerly (i.e. in my previous existence) which gift (did I give), which vow (did I observe), or which penance did I practise, that I, a mortal, have become like Pārvatī in this mortal (world), and that I always occupy half (the portion) of your body, always ride Garuḍa, and went with you to the abode of deities like Indra? Therefore, I desire to ask you, what auspicious (act) I did in the other (i.e. previous) existence, what (kind of) character I had, and whose daughter I was.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

34-45. O dear one, listen attentively. I shall tell you all about the auspicious vow you observed in your former existence. At the end of the Kṛta age in Māyāpurī there was an excellent brāhmaṇa of Atri's family, Devaśarman by name, who had mastered the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas. He was hospitable. He attended (sacred) fire. He was greatly devoted to the vow (in honour) of the Sun. Actually being like another Sun, he everyday propitiated the Sun. The old man had a daughter, Guṇavatī by name. Being sonless, he gave his daughter to his disciple named Candra(śarman). He (i.e. Devaśarman) looked upon him as his (own) son, and he who had controlled his passions, looked upon him as his father. The two, desiring to collect kuśas and fuel, once went to a forest. The two then roamed in the forest at the foot of the Himālaya mountain. Then they saw a fierce demon coming (to them). With their entire body overcome by fear, and unable to run (away), they were killed by the demon with Death-like form. My attendants, moving with me, took them to Vaikuṇṭha-abode due to the efficacy of the region and their religiousness. I was indeed very much pleased with them by virtue of just that act of them, viz. they, as long as they were alive, worshipped the Sun etc. As the rain-water goes to the ocean, the followers of Śiva, the Sun, Gaṇeśa, Viṣṇu, so also the worshippers of Śakti come to me only. I am one, born in five ways, and play with names—as one Devadatta calls his sons etc. with (various) names. Then the two lived in my house; moved in an aeroplane; had the brilliance of the Sun; resembled me in form; were near me; enjoyed divine beautiful women and pleasures like (being smeared with) sandal.

CHAPTER EIGHTYNINE

An Account of Satyabhāmā's Former Birth

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

1-4. Then Guṇavatī, after hearing that the two were killed by a demon, being overcome by grief for her father and husband, lamented piteously: "O lord, O father, where have you gone leaving me (and) without me? Today without you what should I, a young helpless girl, do? Who will affectionately look after me who am adept in nothing, who am grieved, who am living in the house with food, covering etc.? I am unlucky; my happiness is destroyed; my lord is killed; my life is doomed. To whom should I, a helpless young (woman), resort to today?"

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

5-14. Thus having very much lamented like a much afflicted osprey she, being dispirited, fell on the ground like a plantain tree struck by (stormy) wind. Having revived after a long time and lamenting on the ground very piteously, she plunged into the ocean of grief and was overcome by it. She, doing auspicious acts, sold all domestic articles and performed the rites beneficial to the two in the next world. She, highly devoted to Viṣṇu, calm, truthful, pure and with her senses controlled, lived in that city only and sustained her life. From birth till death she properly observed two vows: the vow of Ekādaśī and the vow of (i.e. relating to) Kārtika. O dear one, this couple of vows is very dear to me. It properly brings about pleasures and salvation, and sons and wealth. Those, even being great sinners, who, in the month of Kārtika, when the Sun is in Libra, bathe everyday in the morning, are released. Those men who sweep their house and present (the auspicious sign of) svastika etc. to Viṣṇu and worship Viṣṇu, are liberated while alive. Those men who bathe, keep awake, offer lights, resort to the Tulasī-grove in Kārtika are the forms of Viṣṇu. Those who do like this even for three days in Kārtika, are venerable even to gods. What to say of them who have done it from birth!

15-30. In this way Guṇavatī, always devoted to Viṣṇu's followers, and having fixed her mind on him, passed every year.

O dear one, once she who was emaciated due to old age and was tormented by fever, slowly, somehow, went to Gaṅgā to bathe. When, after she got into the water, she trembled and was oppressed by cold and frightened, she saw an aeroplane that came from the sky. From the sky it approached with (beings) having Viṣṇu's form, having conches, discs and maces in their hands, and properly marked with banners having (the pictures of) eagles. She got into the aeroplane served by a bevy of celestial nymphs. The attendants took her being fanned by chowries, to Vaikuṇṭha. Then she, like the flame of a blazing fire, who was in the aeroplane, obtained my proximity due to the religious merit of the Kārtika vow. Then all the attendants went with me coming to the earth by the request of the deities like Brahmā. O beautiful young lady, all these Yādavas are my attendants only. Your father became (i.e. was born as) this king Satrājit. He who was Candraśarman (became) Akrūra, and you are that Guṇavatī, O auspicious one. Due to the merit of the Kārtika vow, you very much enhance my love. At my door you had formerly made this Tulasī grove. From that this desire-yielding tree has come up in your courtyard, O auspicious one. Since formerly in Kārtika you made illumination, therefore, this Lakṣmī living in your house, has become steady. Since you offered all that vow etc. to Viṣṇu of the from of your husband, therefore, you have become my wife. Due to that vow only which you formerly (i.e. in the former existence) observed in Kārtika, from birth till death, you will never be separated from me. Thus, those men who are highly engrossed in the Kārtika vow, also come near me, as you, causing delight to me (have come). Men performing sacrifices, giving gifts, observing vows, practising penance do not indeed get even a portion of the merit which one gets by the Kārtika vow.

Having thus, at that time, heard (the words) of the lord of the world, Satyā, delighted due to the grandeur produced in the former meritorious existence, saluted the lord of the universe, Kṛṣṇa, who was the only cause of the three worlds, and spoke (those) words.

CHAPTER NINETY

Kārtika Best among Months and Ekādaśī among Days

Satyā said:

1-2. To him of the nature of time, all the parts of time are equal. Then how is Kārtika the best among the months? O lord of the god of gods, how is it that to you Ekādaśī among days and Kārtika among months are dear? Tell (me) the reason for this.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

3-4. O Satyā, you have asked well. Listen with a concentrated mind a dialogue between Vena's son Pṛthu and the divine sage Nārada. What you have asked, O dear one, formerly Nārada was also asked by Pṛthu. The omniscient sage told the reason for the superiority of Kārtika.

Nārada said:

5-17. Formerly there was a demon, the son of the Ocean, named Śaṅkha. He was able to destroy the three worlds and had great power and valour. The great demon, having vanquished the gods, drove them out of heaven. He also snatched the powers of the regents like Indra. Due to his fear gods along with the ladies in their harems and with Indra went to the cave of the Meru mountain and lived there for many years. When the gods who lived in the cave of the Meru mountain, could not be subjugated by the demon, he thought: 'Even though the gods have been vanquished and their powers snatched by me, yet they are full of power. What should I do now? Today it is known (i.e. realised) by me that the gods are endowed with the power of the Vedic hymns. I shall snatch them. Then all of them will be powerless.' Then the mighty demon thinking like this and noticing Viṣṇu to be asleep, quickly snatched from the Satya world the group of the Vedas. He took the Vedas. Due to his fear they moved out, and with the sacrifice and hymns they entered the water (of the ocean). Śaṅkha also, looking for them and wandering in the interior of the ocean, did not notice them

anywhere seated at one place. Then Brahmā with the gods sought the shelter of Viṣṇu. Taking the materials of worship he went to Viṣṇu's house. There the gods performed acts like singing, playing upon musical instruments, and repeatedly (offered him) sandal, flowers, incense and lights. Then the lord devoutly pleased by them, got up. He, having the lustre of a thousand suns was seen there by all the gods. The gods then having worshipped him in sixteen ways fell (i.e. prostrated themselves) on the earth like a staff. Then Viṣṇu said to them:

Viṣṇu said:

18-31. O groups of gods, by means of the auspicious (acts) like singing and (playing upon) the musical instruments, I (am pleased and) will grant you boons. I shall give you all objects desired by your mind. From the Ekādaśī in the bright half of Āśvina till the Udbodhinī Ekādaśī men will daily do as you did with the auspicious (acts) like singing, (playing upon) musical instruments etc. They (will) do what is dear to me, and will ever remain in my vicinity. Since what you did—(offering) water for washing the feet, respectful oblation, and (offering) water for sipping,—has had wonderful effect, it has become the cause of your happiness. O gods, all the Vedas snatched by Śaṅkha remain in water. Having killed the Ocean's son, I shall bring them (back). May the Vedas with the basic hymns and sacrifice always rest in water from today in the month of Kārtika every year. From today I (shall) also remain in water. Along with the chief sages you may also come with me. There is no doubt that those best brāhmaṇas who during this period bathe (daily) in the morning, have well performed the ablution at the end of a sacrifice. O Indra, those men who everyday properly observe the vow in Kārtika, should be always brought by you to my house on their death. And by my order they are always to be protected from dangers. O Varuṇa, you should give them progeny—sons and grandsons etc. O Kubera, you have to increase their wealth by my order. Those men, liberated while alive, actually have my form. Those (men) who have from birth to death observed this best vow according to the rule laid down (in the holy texts), should also be honoured by you. Since you awoke me on the day of Ekādaśī, therefore, this day is always

venerable and gives me joy. This couple of vows, properly observed by men, always gives Kṛṣṇa's proximity. No other vow (does it). O best gods, gifts, (visits to) holy places, austerities, sacrifices, do not always give (i.e. lead to) heaven.

CHAPTER NINETYONE

The Greatness of Prayāga

Nārada said:

1-4a. Saying so, Viṣṇu taking up a form resembling a small glittering fish fell into the hollow of the hands of Kaśyapa at his residence on the Vindhya (mountain). The sage kindly and quickly put him into (his) water-pot. When it could not contain itself there, he put it into a well. When it could not contain itself there, he put it into a lake. In this way it was (in the end) put into the sea. It grew there also. Then Viṣṇu, having the form of the fish, killed Śaṅkha. Then taking him in his hand he came to the Badarī-forest. Calling all the sages there, he ordered them (like) this.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

4b-6. Remove the Vedas dropped into the water. Quickly bring them with the Upaniṣads from the interior of the water. Till then I, with the group of deities, shall live at Prayāga.

Nārada said:

7-11. Then all the sages, endowed with the power of penance, lifted the Vedas with the six Vedāṅgas and with sacrifices. Since then that sage who got a portion of them (i.e. the Vedas) became the seer of that (much portion), O king. Then all the sages together went to Prayāga. They presented the Vedas obtained by them to Viṣṇu with the Creator. Brahmā, obtaining the Vedas with the sacrifices was delighted; and with the group of deities and sages he performed the horse-sacrifice. At the end of the sacrifice lords of gods, siddhas, serpents,

yakṣas fell (i.e. prostrated themselves) like a staff, and requested (Viṣṇu).

Gods said:

12-15. O god of gods, O lord of the world, O master, listen to our request. This is time for our joy. Therefore, be a giver of a boon. O Ramā's lord, the sages themselves have brought to this place the lost Vedas. Due to your favour we have received shares in the sacrifice. May this place always be, by your grace, the best one on the earth. It should increase religious merit and give pleasures and salvation. May this time also be highly meritorious, and may it purify the killers etc. of brāhmaṇas. May it give inexhaustible (objects). Grant us this boon.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

16-28. O gods, I think in the same way as you have said. Let it be so. May this (place) be famous as *Brahmakṣetra*. A king born in the solar dynasty will bring Gaṅgā here. She will be here united with Yamunā, the daughter of the Sun. All of you, Brahmā and others, (should) live here with me. This holy place will be well-known as *Tīrtha-rāja* ('king of holy places'). May acts like (giving) gifts, (practising) penance, (observing) vows, (offering) a sacrifice, muttering (hymns), and worship give inexhaustible fruits. May they always give proximity with me. May sins like the murder of a brāhmaṇa committed during many existences perish the very moment at the sight of this holy place. Similarly the wise cast their bodies in my vicinity. Those men enter my body only and not a new existence. May the groups of the dead ancestors of those who come here and offer a śrāddha intended for the dead ancestors, have the same world as mine. May this very auspicious period also be always fruitful to men. The sin of those who bathe (here) when the Sun has entered Capricornus, perishes. Merely on seeing those who bathe (daily) in the morning in Māgha when the Sun is in Capricornus, sins go away, as darkness on (the appearance of) the Sun. As a result of the (daily) bath in Māgha when the Sun is in Capricornus, I grant men the triad, viz. the same world, the same form (as mine), and proximity (with me) in this order. O best sages, listen all of you. I am the giver of boons to you. I,

the omniscient one, always live in Badarīvana. That fruit which you get after ten years by (practising) penance at other place, is always got here by you within a day. Those best men who see that place, are liberated while alive. Then no sin resides in them.

Sūta said:

29-30. Having spoken like this to the gods, the god of gods vanished there only with Brahmā. All gods also lived there in portions. And those (gods), Indra and others, vanished. That best man of a pure heart who would listen to this religious verse or make others listen to it (i.e. tell it to others), would obtain the fruit which is obtained in the lord of holy places, Badarīvana, and (would) also (obtain) me[1].

CHAPTER NINETYTWO

Rules for the Vow of Kārtika

Pṛthu said:

1. O sage, you told me the great fruit of the vows of Kārtika and Māgha. O Nārada, you also (told me) properly about the rite of bathing and about the restraints. (Now) please tell me in due order the bringing to completion (of that rite).

Nārada said:

2-15. You are born from a portion of Viṣṇu. (Therefore) nothing is unknown to you. Yet, O son of Vena, listen properly to the importance from me who am telling it. A man, being careful, should observe the rule about the vow of Kārtika, when it would be the Ekādaśī of the bright half of the month of Āśvina. When a quarter of the night is left, he, the observer of the vow, with a vessel containing water should go out of his house in the south-west direction. By the day and in the evening

1. 'Me' here standing for Sūta obviously has no relevance.

after having placed his sacred thread on his ear, after having covered the ground with grass, after having covered his head with a garment, having carefully controlled his mouth, without spitting or panting, he should pass urine or feces after facing the north. If it is night he should face the south. Having held his organ of generation he should get up. Taking pure clay, he should carefully make purification (i.e. wash) by which the smearing and odour will vanish. He should apply (clay) to his organ of generation once, to the anus five times, to the left hand ten times, to both the hands seven times, and to the feet thrice (and then wash them with water). Twice this (number) is told for a celibate, and thrice for a hermit, four times for an ascetic. Half (the number should be used for) purification at night. Half of it (should be employed when he is) travelling. Half of it is (recommended) for women and śūdras. All the acts of him who does not go through the act of purification, are useless. The hymns of one not having his mouth pure, are said not to give the (desired) fruit. After that he should carefully cleanse his teeth and tongue, 'O tree, give us (long) life, power, success, vigour, progeny, animals and wealth.' Uttering this hymn, (he should take a piece of) wood of the length of twelve fingers of the kṣīra tree[1] without fasting on the diminutive day (*obscure*) (and he should cleanse his teeth). He should not cleanse his teeth on the first day, the new-moon day, the ninth day, the sixth day, a Sunday and at the time of the lunar or solar eclipse. He should avoid cleansing his teeth with (a stick of) the kaṇṭakī tree, cotton tree, nirguṇḍa tree, palāśa tree, bilva tree, castor oil plant, and iṅgudī tree.

16-30. Then he, with a pleased mind and devoted, should go, taking with him sandal, flowers, good tāmbūlas to the temple of Viṣṇu and Śiva. Then having separately offered articles (and modes) of worship like water for washing the feet, respectful oblation etc., and bowed again, he should do auspicious things like singing. He should also honour the good dancers having musical instruments made of bell-metal, lutes, tabors etc., so also he should honour the singers with fragrant flowers and

1, Kṣīravṛkṣa—Name of the four trees, viz. Nyagrodha, Udumbara, Aśvattha and Madhūka.

tāmbūlas, since they are the forms of Viṣṇu. In the Kali age penance, sacrifice, gifts made with devotion to the good lord of the world, always give delight. O king, I asked, "O lord of gods, where do you live?" Viṣṇu, pleased with my devotion then spoke to me thus: "I do not live in Vaikuṇṭha, nor in the heart of the yogins. O Nārada, I stay there where my devotees sing (my praise). Those foolish men who, after hearing a good narrative from a Purāṇa or the singing of my devotees, do not long for me, are hated by me. Men (should) worship them (devotees) with sandal, flowers etc. By that I am so much pleased as I am not pleased with my worship," Viṣṇu should not be worshipped with the flowers of śirīṣa, dhattura, hill-plantain, jasmine, śālmali, sun-plant, karṇikāra and with sacred rice grains. So also Śiva should not be worshipped with the flowers of japā, kunda, śirīṣa, jasmine, white jasmine, ketakī. One should not worship Gaṇeśa with Tulasī-leaves and Pārvatī with dūrvās. A man desiring wealth should not, in the same way, worship the Sun with damanaka flowers. Always he should use fragrant and best flowers for worship. Having thus offered the worship, he should apologise to the god of gods: 'O lord of gods, may whatever I have offered as worship without hymns, rites and without devotion, be complete. Then having gone round (the deity by keeping the deity) to his right, he should salute (i.e. prostrate himself) like a staff. He should again apologise to the deity and the singers etc. Those men who, on a night in Kārtika, properly worship Viṣṇu or Śiva, have their sins completely destroyed, and their ancestors go to Viṣṇu's abode.

CHAPTER NINETYTHREE

The Bath Rite

Nārada said:

1-10. When the night is left as much as two nāḍikās (i.e. fortyeight minutes), he, being pure (i.e. having purified himself),

should (taking) with (him) sesamum-seeds, sandal, sacred rice grains, flowers, lights etc., go to a pond. The bath in an artificial pond, a natural pond, in a river or at a confluence of two rivers, is said to be giving tenfold merit in (the succeeding) order. (A bath taken) at a holy place is said to give unending fruit. Having remembered Viṣṇu, he should take the solemn vow of bathing. He should offer respectful oblations to the holy places, deities etc. in (proper) order. (He should say): "Om, salutation to Kamalanābha. Salutation to him lying in water. Accept (this) respectful offering. Salutation to you. Since Viṣṇu moved in Vaikuṇṭha, Prayāga and Badarikāśrama, he planted his foot in three ways. With all those sages and deities, may gods protect me for this reason that from here Viṣṇu moved on. In Kārtika, to please (you), O best god, Dāmodara, lord of the god of gods, I shall bathe in the morning (everyday). (Be) with me. O lord of gods, O Dāmodara, I am eager to bathe in this water after having reflected on you. May my sin perish due to your grace. O Hari, with Rādhā accept the respectful offering made by me at (the time of) an obligatory or occasional (rite) in the sin-destroying Kārtika in the Kali age. O Hari, with Rādhā accept the respectful offering given by me who observe a vow in the month of Kārtika, of me who have bathed duly."

11-19. After having remembered Gaṅgā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, the Sun, he should enter the water. He who observes the vow, should, standing in water deep up to the navel, bathe duly. A householder should bathe with (i.e. after applying) the powder of sesamum-seeds and āmalaka. For the hermits and ascetics the clay at the root of Tulasī (is recommended). He should not bathe with (i.e. after applying) āmalaka fruits and sesamum-seeds on the seventh, the new-moon day, the ninth of both (fortnights) and on the tenth day. First he should bathe with dust (i.e. applying clay etc.). Then he should bathe with the (recital of) hymns. For women and śūdras (the bath is) not (recommended) with (the recital of) Vedic hymns, (but only) with the Purāṇic ones. (Now follow) the hymns at the time of bathing: "May Viṣṇu, the destroyer of all sins, who formerly for the mission of the gods divided himself into three due to devotion for them, now protect me compassionately. For this Kārtika vow may all gods having

received Viṣṇu's order, always protect and purify me. May all the Vedic hymns along with their seeds, secrets and power, so also sages like Kaśyapa, always purify me. May all rivers like Gaṅgā, the big rivers giving water, all tanks with the seven seas, purify me. May chaste women like Aditi, yakṣas, siddhas with serpents, herbs, mountains, beings in the three worlds quickly purify me."

20-32. Having bathed with (the recital of) these hymns, the observer of the vow, putting a ring of kuśa grass on (the fourth finger of) his hand, should properly offer libations of water to gods, sages, human beings and (his) dead ancestors. Then the observer of the vow, having come out of the water and having covered himself with a pure garment, should, after having finished rites proper for the morning, again worship Viṣṇu. Being diligent and with his mind fixed on him (i.e. Viṣṇu), he should, after remembering the holy places etc. and deities, again offer worship with sandal, flowers and fruits. The prayer at (the time of making) the respectful offering is: "O destroyer of the lord of demons, accept the respectful oblation given by me—(oblation) of me who have properly bathed (in the morning) in the month of Kārtika." Then devoutly (honouring) the brāhmaṇas who have mastered the Vedas with sandal, flowers and fruits, he should feed them and salute them again and again. By worshipping the brāhmaṇas, the holy places residing in the right foot, the Vedas residing in the mouth, and the deities residing in the entire body, would be worshipped. The brāhmaṇas are the forms of the unmanifest Viṣṇu on the earth. By one desiring (one's) good they should never be humiliated; they should never be opposed. The observer of the vow should worship Tulasī, dear to Viṣṇu. With a concentrated mind he should go round and salute Tulasī. "O Tulasī, you have been formerly created by gods. You have been worshipped by the best sages. Salutation, obeisance to you, O Tulasī. O you dear to Viṣṇu, remove my sin." Then the devout observer of the vow, of an affectionate mind, should listen to Viṣṇu's account (as told) in the Purāṇa, and should honour that brāhmaṇa, the brāhmaṇa sage (who reads or tells the account). A devout man who properly performs the complete rite which is told before, obtains the same world as of Viṣṇu. On the earth

there is no vow other than that of Kārtika and dear to Viṣṇu, which removes diseases, which destroys sins, which is great, which gives good thoughts, which is the means of sons, wealth etc., and which is the cause of salvation.

CHAPTER NINETYFOUR

Restraints during the Kārtika Vow

Nārada said:

1-17. O king, listen fully to the restraints told for men observing the Kārtika vow, which (will) be told by me. The observer of the Kārtika vow should not at all eat any kind of flesh and meat, honey, jujube fruit and beans etc. The observer of the Kārtika vow should avoid corn (whose seeds have) two portions, sesamum oil, so also food polluted by tears, polluted by (bad) thoughts, polluted by (bad) words. The observer of the Kārtika vow should not accept others' food, should not hate others, should not be an adulterer, should not accept gifts at a holy place. He who observes the vow in Kārtika should avoid the censure of the god of gods, brāhmaṇas, (his) preceptor, (another man) observing the vow, of women, kings, and great (men). The limb of an animal, meat, powder, jambīra among the fruits, flesh, masūrikā (a kind of pulse) among corns, and stale food, are said to be avoided. So also milk etc. other than that of a goat, a cow, a buffalo, āmiṣa, all liquids purchased by a brāhmaṇa, and rock salt. Gavya (i.e. milk, curds etc.) kept in a copper-vessel, water collected in a small pool, and food cooked for oneself is said to be 'āmiṣa' by the wise. The observer of the (Kārtika) vow should observe celibacy, should sleep on the ground, should eat from a plate made of leaves. He should eat during the fourth part of the day. He should always do this. On the Naraka Caturdaśī day the observer of the Kārtika vow should smear his body with oil. He should not smear his body with oil on any other day (than the Naraka Caturdaśī day). The observer of the Kārtika vow should

avoid onions, garlic, pot-herb, mushroom, small red variety of garlic, lotus-stalk, radish, so also asafoetida. The observer of the vow (in honour) of Viṣṇu should avoid bottle-gourd, egg-plant, pumpkin-gourd, and the fruit (of the plant) of bṛhatī, so also śleṣmātaka fruit and wood-apple. The observer of the Kārtika vow should not talk with a woman in her menses, a man of the lowest caste, a non-Aryan, a fallen person, an out-cast, and those out of the fold of the Vedas and the (three) twice-born castes. The observer of the Kārtika vow should avoid the food seen by dogs and crows, food prepared by a woman who has recently delivered, and food cooked twice, and burnt food. He who avoids smearing his body with oil, (sleeping on) a bed, others' food, eating from a bell-metal vessel in Kārtika, would be one who fully observes the vow. The observer of the vow should also observe the Kṛcchra vow etc. according to his capacity. (From the first day) he should avoid in order pumpkin gourd, egg-plant, root of bṛhatī, bilva-fruit, kaliṅga fruit, dhātrī, coconut, large-sized bottle-gourd, (species of cucumber called) paṭola, badarī fruit, bhūrja-fruit, vikataka-fruit, lotus-stalk and vikaṭa-fruit.

18-28. From the first day (onwards) these vegetables are to be avoided in the order (given here). Similarly, a householder should always avoid (eating) dhātri-fruit on Sunday. From among these also the man should avoid what pleases Viṣṇu. Having given that to a brāhmaṇa, the man should always eat. In the same way the observer of the vow should have restraints in Māgha also. He should keep awake and observe the rite as is told. Seeing the man observing the Kārtika vow as told (in the holy texts), Yama's messengers run away like elephants tormented by a lion. This vow (in honour) of Viṣṇu is superior to a hundred sacrifices. The performer of a sacrifice goes to heaven; the observer of the Kārtika vow goes to Vaikuṇṭha. All the holy places giving enjoyments and salvation, that are there on the earth, remain in the house of the observer of the Kārtika-vow. A bad dream, or whatever bad deed is done through mind, speech and body, goes away that moment only on seeing the observer of the Kārtika vow. Like the servants of a king, Indra and others urged by Viṣṇu's words protect the man who observes the Kārtika vow. Imps, ghosts, goblins etc. do not

remain there where the observers of the Viṣṇu vow are always honoured. Even Brahmā, with his four mouths, would not be able to describe the religious merit of him who observes the Kārtika vow as told (in the holy texts). (If) a man observes, along with restraints, the vow in Kārtika, which is dear to Viṣṇu, which destroys all sins, which gives sons, wealth, grains and prosperity everywhere, (then) what is the use of visiting and paying homage to sacred places for him?

CHAPTER NINETYFIVE

Bringing the Vow to Conclusion

Nārada said:

1-9. O king, now listen properly to the rite of bringing to conclusion—what the rite is—being told by me in brief. The observer of the vow should bring to conclusion the vow on the fourteenth of Kārtika for pleasing Viṣṇu. Above the Tulasī he should put up an auspicious pavilion with a good arched doorway and beautified with flowers and chowries. At the doors he should separately honour the door-keepers. He (should have) Jaya and Vijaya, meritorious and of good character. At the root of the Tulasī he should draw (an) auspicious (circle) all around. It should be properly beautified and ornamented with four colours. Above it should be a covering (decked) with five jewels. Having placed there a pitcher with a big fruit, he should worship there the god of gods holding a conch, a disc, a mace, having put on a silken yellow garment and with Lakṣmī. The observer of the vow should also honour in the circle the regents of quarters like Indra, since he was awakened by the gods on Dvādaśī along with Trayodaśī. He was seen to be honoured on the fourteenth. Therefore, he is more venerable. A man, calm and of a restrained mind, should devoutly fast on that day.

10-24. With his preceptor's consent he should worship the golden (image of) the lord of the god of gods in sixteen ways of worship with several eatables. By means of auspicious (acts

like) singing and (playing upon) musical instruments, he should keep awake at night. Those who on (the night of) keeping awake in honour of the Disc-holder (i.e. Viṣṇu), sing devoutly, are free from heaps of sins due to hundreds of existences. That fruit (which is obtained) by those keeping awake on the day of Viṣṇu, and singing and dancing, is said to be the fruit of those who give a thousand cows. He should sing, dance etc. and should present spectacles. Of him who keeps awake on the night of keeping awake for Viṣṇu, in front of Viṣṇu, he who amuses Viṣṇu's devotees by reciting Viṣṇu's accounts, who produces the sounds of musical instruments with his mouth, and who presents free talks, who with these dispositions keeps awake in honour of Viṣṇu, his religious merit everyday is said to be equal to (a visit to) crores of holy places. Then on the full-moon day he should invite thirty or more brāhmaṇas with their wives according to his capacity. Since having given boons Viṣṇu took up the form of fish, therefore, whatever is given, offered into fire or muttered is said to be of an inexhaustible fruit. Therefore, the observerer of the vow should feed those brāhmaṇas with sweetened milk etc. He should (saying) *Ato deva*, offer sesamum-seeds and sweetened milk to two separately for pleasing the god of gods and deities. Having then worshipped the god (Viṣṇu), Tulasī and (other) deities, he should give them presents according to his capacity and salute them. Then the observer of the vow should duly worship there a tawny cow. Having honoured his preceptor instructing him in the vow with garments, ornaments etc. and having honoured him with his wife, he should give the cow to him. 'Due to your grace may the lord of gods be always pleased with me. May all that sin committed by me during seven existences, perish due to this vow, and may my progeny be stable. Due to the worship may my desires be always fruitful. On death may I obtain Viṣṇu's position very difficult to be secured.'

25-31 Having thus apologised to and pleased the brāhmaṇas, he should dismiss them. Then the observer of the vow should give (the materials of) the worship with the jewels to his preceptor. Then the devoted one should eat with his friends and elders. The rite is said to be like this in Kārtika or Māgha. A man who thus duly observes the Kārtika vow, is free from

sins, and getting release he would go into Viṣṇu's proximity. The fruit due to the proper observance of this vow should be known to be a crore times more than that of all vows, (visits to) all holy places and all gifts. Those who are engrossed in devotion to Viṣṇu and who observe the Kārtika vow are lucky and very meritorious, and get all the fruits. Sins remaining in his body have deliberation through fear of him. They say, 'If this man observes this vow, where shall we go?' Those devotees who in this way listen to the restraints, and those who narrate them before Viṣṇu's devotees, would obtain the fruit due to their having properly observed the vow, and have all their sins destroyed.

CHAPTER NINETYSIX

The Birth of Jalandhara

Pṛthu said:

1-3. O brāhmaṇa, (after listening to) the vow of Kārtika that you told in detail, and the worship of Viṣṇu at the Tulasī root that you told, I desire to ask about the greatness of Tulasī. How is she so very dear to the god of gods, Viṣṇu, Śārṅgin? How and at what place has she sprung up, O Nārada? (Please) tell this in brief. I look upon you as omniscient.

Nārada said:

4-11. Formerly when Rudra hurled down the Ocean's son, the lord of demons, gods like Brahmā bowed to Rudra with their heads (bent). O king, listen. I shall tell you the greatness of Tulasī. I shall tell you all the old account with its history. Formerly, Indra surrounded by all deities and waited upon by celestial nymphs, went to Kailāsa mountain, to see Śiva. When he went to Śiva's house, he quickly saw there a man of fearful deeds and fierce due to his fangs and eyes. He asked him: "O, who are you? Where has the lord of the world gone?" When asked repeatedly like this, he did not speak. O king, Indra got

angry, reproached him, and said (these) words, "O, though asked by me you have not given a reply. Therefore, I shall kill you with the thunderbolt. O you wicked one, who is your protector here?" Speaking like this, then Indra struck him hard with his thunderbolt. Due to that (stroke) his throat became dark blue and the thunderbolt was reduced to ash. Then Rudra blazed, as it were burning with lustre. Seeing (this), Bṛahaspati quickly joined the palms of his hands. And Indra prostrating like a staff on the ground started praising (him).

Bṛhaspati said:

12-14. Obeisance to Devādhideva (i.e. god of gods), to Tryambaka (i.e. having three eyes), to Kapardin (i.e. having braided and matted hair), to Tripuraghna (i.e. the destroyer of Tripura), to Śarva; salutation to the killer of Andhaka. Salutation to Virūpa (i.e. the deformed one), to Atirūpa (i.e. having a superior form), to Bahurūpa (i.e. the multi-formed one), to Śambhu, to the destroyer, and the giver of the fruit of the sacrifices. (Salutation) to the destroyer of Death, to Kāla (i.e. Death), to him, having a deadly snake; salutation to him who destroyed Brahmā's head; repeated salutations to the brāhmaṇa.

Nārada said:

15-16. Thus praised, Śiva, withdrawing the flame capable of burning the three worlds, said to the best brāhmaṇa (i.e. (Bṛhaspati): "O brāhmaṇa, ask for a boon. I am pleased with this praise of (i.e. done by) you. Be famous as (i.e. by the name) 'Jīva' as you gave back (i.e. saved) Indra's life."

Bṛhaspati said:

17. If, O god, you are pleased, (then) go to Indra who has sought your refuge. May this fire, risen from the (third) eye on your forhead be quelled.

The lord said:

18. How can this (fire) enter the eye on the forehead? I shall cast it (far) away so that it would not trouble Indra.

Nārada said:

19-24a. Saying so, and holding it in his hand, he threw it into the salt Ocean. It fell at the confluence of the river Gaṅgā and the Ocean. Then it got a child's form and wept. Due to the sound of its weeping the earth repeatedly trembled. Heaven and Satyaloka became deafened due to that sound. Hearing it, and being very much wonderstruck, Brahmā went there (saying): 'What is this?' Just then he saw the child on the lap of the Ocean. Seeing Brahmā coming, the Ocean too, joined the palms of his hands, and bowing to him with his head (bent) put the boy on his lap. Then Brahmā said (these) words: "Whose wonderful child is this?" Hearing (these) words of Brahmā, the Ocean said (these) words.

Brahmā said:

24b-25a. O you lord of the rivers, wherefrom did you get this very strong boy, by whose sound gods, demons and great serpents are frightened?

The Ocean said:

25b-27. O Brahman, this is my boy born on the river Gaṅgā. O lord of the world, perform for him the ceremonies (performed) at the birth of a child etc.

Ocean's son seized Brahmā's beard, and repeatedly shook it. From the eyes of him whose beard was (thus being) shaken, tears came (out). Somehow getting his beard freed, Brahmā said to the Ocean.

Brahmā said:

28-30. Since he held these tears from my eyes, therefore, he will be famous by the name 'Jalandhara'. Now only he will be a youth, master of all weapons and sacred books and will not be killed by any being except Rudra; and he will go where a born one goes.

Nārada said:

31-33. Speaking like this and calling Śukra he consecrated

him on the throne. Taking leave of the lord of rivers, Brahmā vanished (from there). Then, the Ocean, with his eyes blooming with joy on seeing him, solicited Kālanemi's daughter Vṛndā for (being) his wife. Those demons, led by Kālanemi, were glad and gave that daughter to him (i.e. to Jalandhara). He, the mighty and powerful one, aided by Śukra, getting them as best friends, ruled over the earth.

CHAPTER NINETYSEVEN

The Conquest of Amarāvatī by Jalandhara

Nārada said:

1-6a. Those demons living in the nether world and formerly vanquished by gods, became fearless and came to the earth to serve him. Some time seeing Rāhu with his head cut off, the lord of the demons asked the brāhmaṇa, viz. Śukra: "O lord, who has done this?" Bhārgava told him (the account of) the cutting off of Rāhu's head and the churning of the ocean for nectar done by gods. So also the snatching of the jewels and the defeat of the demons. Hearing about that churning of his father, his eyes were red with anger. He sent a gluttonous messenger to Indra. The messenger, going to heaven, quickly reached the assembly of gods, (and) with his head not bent due to pride, said to the lord of gods.

The messenger said:

6b-8. The Ocean's son Jalandhara is the lord of all demons. I am the messenger sent by him. Listen to what he has said: "Why did you churn my father with a mountain? Give back quickly to me all those jewels taken (by you)."

Hearing these words of the messenger, the lord of the gods was amazed. And with fear and anger he spoke to the fearful, voracious (messenger):

The lord said:

9-12. Listen, O messenger, since the mountains afraid of me were put by him to his side, I formerly churned the Ocean. He also protected my other enemies, the sons of Diti. Therefore, I took away all that collection of the jewels. Formerly Śaṅkha, the Ocean's son, hated gods. He too, struck by my younger brother (i.e. Viṣṇu), entered the interior of the Ocean. So go and tell him fully the reason of the churning (of the Ocean).

Nārada said:

13-23. The messenger, thus dismissed by Indra, came home. He then told the words (i.e. the message) of Indra to his king. Hearing it, the demon, with his lips quivering with anger, quickly exerted (himself) with a desire to conquer the gods. In that exertion of (conquering) Indra, the sons of Diti came in hundreds and crores from the directions and the nether world. The demon (Jalandhara) with crores of generals of the army like Śumbha and Niśumbha, went to heaven and stood for the war. Gods, furnished with armours for the war, went out of Amarāvatī. Seeing the demon-army, they stood surrounding the city. Then the war between the armies of gods and demons took place with (the use of) pestles, iron clubs, arrows, maces, axes and (the weapons called) śakti. Rushing to one another, they struck one another. In a moment the two armies were wet with the stream of blood. The battlefield appeared like the evening with the cover of clouds, due to the elephants, horses, chariots and foot-soldiers that had fallen and that were being knocked down. Bhārgava brought back to life the demons killed in that war with drops of water consecrated with the magic formulas bringing back the dead to life. In the same way Bṛhaspati also brought the gods back to life in that war after repeatedly bringing the herbs from the region of Droṇa (mountain). Seeing gods again coming back to life in that war Jalandhara, being angry, said (these) words to Bhārgava:

Jalandhara said:

24. How is it that the gods killed by me in the war again come back to life? It is well-known that your science of bringing back (the dead) to life does not reside anywhere else (i.e. is not known to anyone else).

Bhṛgu said:

25. Bṛhaspati, bringing herbs from the Droṇa mountain, brings back the gods to life. Quickly snatch away the Droṇa mountain.

Nārada said:

26-33. The lord of the demons, thus told, quickly took the Droṇa mountain and threw it into the ocean and again came back to the great battle(field). Then seeing the gods killed, Guru went to the Droṇa mountain. He, honoured by the gods, did not see the lordly mountain there. Knowing that Droṇa was snatched by the demon, he was sad and overcome by fear. He with his body overcome by breathlessness (i.e. panting), spoke from a distance: "Flee, flee; he cannot be conquered. He is born of the portion of Rudra. Remember Indra's act." Hearing his words, gods, overpowered by fear and being killed by the demons, ran in the ten directions. Seeing the gods rent, the demon, the Ocean's son, entered Amarāvatī with the sounds of conches, drums and shouts of victory. When the demon entered the city, gods led by Indra and tormented by the demons, reached a cave in Meru and lived there. Then having separately made the excellent demons like Śumbha in-charge of Indra etc. he (i.e. Jalandhara) again went to the cave on the golden mountain (i.e. Meru).

CHAPTER NINETYEIGHT

Viṣṇu Promises not to Kill Ja landhara

Nārada said:

1. Seeing the demon to have come again, gods with Indra trembled with fear and started praising Viṣṇu.

Gods said:

2-4. Obeisance to you who are always ready for (serving) the purpose of the devotee by (taking) many forms like that of the

Fish or the Tortoise; (to you) who remove affliction, who are the author of the Creator etc., the creation, maintenance and destruction (of the world); who have in your hands a mace, a conch, a lotus etc. We bow to you, lord of Ramā (i.e. Lakṣmī), the killer of the demons, the lord of the first among the serpents (i.e. Śeṣa), (to you) wearing a yellow garment, maturing the rites like a sacrifice etc., the great author (of everything), fit to be resorted to. Salutation to that Viṣṇu, the thunderbolt of Indra for destroying the mountain of the grief of the gods tormented by the demons, (to Viṣṇu) lying on the bed of the lord of serpents, having two eyes in the form of the Sun and the Moon. We salute him.

Nārada said:

5-7. He who would everyday recite (this) hymn, destroying calamities, is never troubled by calamities due to Viṣṇu's grace. When the gods thus praised (Viṣṇu) the enemy of the demons, Viṣṇu came to know about the calamity of the gods. The enemy of the demons, getting up quickly with his mind dejected through pity, quickly mounted upon Garuḍa, and said (these) words to Lakṣmī.

Viṣṇu said:

8. Your brother Jalandhara has played havoc among the gods. Invited by them, I shall quickly go to fight.

Lakṣmī said:

9. O you treasure of compassion, O my lord, if I am always dear to you and your devotee, then how should my brother be killed by you in a battle?

The lord said:

10. Due to his being born from a portion of Rudra, due to Brahmā's statement (about him), and due to your love (for him), Jalandhara shall never be killed by me.

Nārada said:

11-19. Speaking like this, Viṣṇu holding a conch, a disc, a mace and a sword, mounted upon Garuḍa, and went there

where the gods were praising him. The demons tormented by the wind (produced) by the very strong wings of (Garuḍa) whose younger brother is Aruṇa wandered like the clouds in the sky turned round by a storm. Then Jalandhara, seeing the demons tormented, did not utter a word, (but) angrily came to Viṣṇu. Then a great fight took place between Viṣṇu and the lord of demons, making the sky having no room in it with their arrows. With volleys of arrows Viṣṇu cut off the demon's banner, umbrella, bow and horses and struck him on his chest with one arrow. Then the demon having a mace in his hand, jumped quickly, struck Garuḍa on his head and knocked him down on the ground. Viṣṇu laughed and cut off the mace with his sword. (Just) then he struck on Viṣṇu's strong heart (chest) with his strong fist. Then the two very strong ones had a hand-to-hand fight, resounding the earth with their arms, fists, and knees. Having thus fought for a very long time, the brave Viṣṇu spoke with a deep-sounding voice to the king of the demons.

Viṣṇu said:

20. O lord of demons, ask for a boon. Due to your valour I am pleased with you. I shall even give you what cannot be given—(ask for) whatever is in your mind.

Jalandhara said:

21. O brother-in-law, if you are pleased with me, then grant me this boon—with that my sister (Lakṣmī) and with your attendants, you stay in my house.

Nārada said:

22-29. Saying "Let it be so", the lord with all his divine attendants went with Lakṣmī to the city named Jalandhara. Jalandhara also putting the gods in the custody of the demons, gladly again came back to the earth. The Ocean's son brought under his control whatever jewels belonged to the gods, gandharvas and siddhas. The strong one having placed the very strong Niśumbha in the Pātāla-abode took Śeṣa and others to the earth. Making the multitudes of gods, gandharvas, siddhas, yakṣas, demons and human beings the residents of his city, he ruled over the three worlds. Having thus subjugated the gods he righteo-

usly looked after his subjects like his own sons. When he was (thus) ruling righteously, no one was sick, no one was afflicted; similarly no one was weak, no one appeared helpless. When thus the lord of demons was righteously and properly ruling over the earth, some time, by chance, I went (to that city) to see his prosperity and to serve (Viṣṇu), Lakṣmī's husband.

CHAPTER NINETYNINE

Rāhu Acts as Messenger of Jalandhara

Nārada said:

1. O best king, that lord of demons having duly and very devoutly honoured me, laughed and said (these) words.

Jalandhara said:

2. O sage, tell me why have you come here, O brāhmaṇa; so also what you have seen and where, and why you have come here.

Nārada said:

3-16. O lord of demons, I had, by chance, gone to the peak of Kailāsa (mountain). There I met Śiva seated with Umā in the great forest of desire-yielding trees extended over a myriad of yojanas, crowded with hundreds of desire-yielding cows, and well-lit with the desire-yielding gem. Seeing the great wonder a thought then arose in my mind. Such abundance may or may not be anywhere in the three worlds. O lord of demons, great opulence is collected by you. With a desire to see that I have come here to you. Seeing this prosperity, except the jewels in the form of women of you, I certainly think that there is none else (as) rich as Śiva. Though celestial damsels and nāga damsels are under your control, yet they are not certainly like Pārvatī in beauty, in whose ocean of beauty formerly Brahmā got murged and lost his fortitude. Who else can be compared with her? Formerly by her in the form of a bhilla woman was subjugated

by means of penance (Śiva) who was without any attachment, who was Madana's enemy, on whom the universe depends at his pleasure, (but) who wandered in the forest of her beauty. On repeatedly seeing her form at the time of creation, the Creator created the celestial nymphs. (But) no one resembled her. Therefore, she, the best one, is the prosperity of him, the enjoyer of the gems of women. O you lord of demons, you, the lord of all gems, (do) not (have a gem) like that.

When, having talked like this, I took his leave and left, the lord of the demons had his body tormented with the 'fever' of love on hearing about her beauty. Then he sent Siṁhikā's son (Rāhu) as his messenger to Śiva. Then being deluded a little by Viṣṇu's Māyā (illusory power) Rāhu went to Kailāsa, having the lustre of the moon in the bright half. But he obtained the lustre of the moon in the dark half through the totality of (the lustre) from his body (i.e. he fully resembled the moon in the dark half of the month). Śiva was informed (of his arrival), and by his order he was taken in by Nandin. Urged by the indication of the creeper-like brow (of Śiva), he said (these) words.

Rāhu said:

17-19. O bull-bannered god, listen to the command of the lord served by serpents, master of the three worlds, master of all gems. "How can you, the naked one living in the cremation ground, wearing a string of heads, have this charming wife, the daughter of the Himālaya Mountain? I am the lord of jewels; and she is called a gem among women. Therefore, she is proper for me and not for you eating (i.e. subsisting on) alms."

Nārada said:

20-26. When, at that time Rāhu was speaking like this, a fierce man, with a voice like that of the violent thunderbolt was produced from the space between the eye-brows of Śiva. His face was like that of a lion; his tongue was moving; his eyes were fiery; he was great; his hair was erect; his body was dry; he was, as it were, another Nṛsiṁha. He set about to eat him. Seeing him Rāhu overcome by fear, speedily ran out; but he

seized him (i.e. Rāhu). Then that Rāhu of big arms said to the lord of the god of gods with a grave voice like (the sound of) the clouds: "Protect me who have sought your refuge. He has come to eat me, a brāhmaṇa, O Mahādeva. O you, who love those that seek your refuge, protect me from him." Hearing the words of that brāhmaṇa, Mahādeva then said: "He should not be killed, since, being a messenger, he is dependent upon another. Leave him" The man hearing these words, left Rāhu in the sky. Leaving Rāhu the man respectfully said to Mahādeva.

The man said:

27. O master, hunger oppresses me. I am fully emaciated with hunger. O lord, order what I should eat.

The lord said:

28a. Quickly eat the flesh of your hands and feet.

Nārada said:

28b-30. When the man thus ordered by Śiva ate up the flesh of his hands and feet, and when he remained with the head only, Śiva, seeing him with the head left, was very much pleased, and with amazement said to that man of fierce acts:

The lord said:

31. Having the name of 'Kīrtimukha' always remain at my door. Those who do not honour you, do not do what is dear to me.

Nārada said:

32-34. Since then Kīrtimukha remains at the door of the lord. The worship of those who do not honour him would be in vain. That Rāhu who was left by him fell on the Barbara region. Therefore, on the earth he is known as *Barbarodbhūta* Then Rāhu, thinking that he was reborn here, told all this done by Śiva to Jalandhara after approaching him.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED

Śiva's Attendants Fight the Demons off

Nārada said:

1-4. Hearing that Jalandhara with his body overcome by anger went out surrounded by crores of (soldiers in the) army of the demons. Śukra went before him. Rāhu remained within (the range of) his sight. His crown quickly slipped and fell on the ground. The entire sky shone with hundreds of aeroplanes occupied by the army of the demons as with clouds in the rainy season. Then seeing his exertion, gods led by Indra and with their hurry unnoticed, respectfully said to Śiva:

The gods said:

5. O master, how do you not know that the gods are respectfully speaking to you. For our protection kill the Ocean's son.

Nārada said:

6. Hearing these words of the gods Śiva laughed and calling the great Viṣṇu said these words to him:

The lord said:

7. O Viṣṇu, how (i.e. why) did you not kill Jalandhara in the battle? Afraid of him, you left your Vaikuṇṭha and went away.

Lord (Viṣṇu) said:

8. In the battle I did not kill the demon, since he was born from your portion, and since he is also Lakṣmī's brother. (Now) you (please) kill that demon.

The lord said:

9. He, of a great lustre, cannot be killed by me with these weapons and missiles. All the gods should give me a portion of their lustre.

Nārada said:

10-17a. Then gods, led by Viṣṇu, gave their own lustres.

The lord saw a great lustre (formed) by their coming together suddenly. Mahādeva fashioned an excellent weapon, the disc (called) Sudarśana, very fierce(-looking) because of a series of flames (issuing forth). Then Śiva fashioned the thunderbolt with the remaining lustre. (Just) then Jalandhara was seen at the region at the foot of Kailāsa (mountain).

He was surrounded by crores of elephants, horses, chariots and foot-soldiers. Seeing him as he came there, the gods being delighted went (to fight). (Śiva's) attendants hurriedly got ready to fight. All the attendants led by Nandin, Gajānana, Kārtikeya, and maddened to fight, got down from Kailāsa by Śiva's order. Then on the land at the foot of Kailāsa a war between the lordly Pramathas (Śiva's attendants) and the demons took place. It was fierce, and full of weapons and missiles. The earth that resounded with the sounds of multitudes of drums, tabors, conches, giving joy to the heroes, so also with the sounds of elephants, horses and chariots, trembled.

17b-26. With the multitudes of śaktis, iron clubs and arrows, with pestles, barbed missiles and sharp-edged spears, the entire sky shone, as if it was covered with meteors. The entire land shone with the chariots, elephants and horses that were struck down. (The ground) was as it were covered with the tops of mountains struck by thunderbolt. The ground was inaccessible due to the multitudes of demons killed by Pramathas (attendants), and with marrow, blood, mire of flesh etc. Bhārgava brought back to life the multitudes of demons killed by Pramathas. Seeing (Bhārgava) bringing repeatedly back to life by the power of the Sañjīvanī-vidyā those that died in the battle, all the attendants (of Śiva) were perplexed and struck by fear. They told the lord of the god of gods all that Śukra had done. Then from Rudra's mouth a destructive, very fearful deity was produced. Having shanks like tāla (trees), fat, crooked, and pressing the trees with her breasts, she reached the battlefield, and ate the great demons. Seizing Bhārgava in her hand she went and vanished. Seeing Bhārgava seized the divisions of the demon-army had their faces dejected; (but) maddened for fighting, they struck through pride. Struck by the fear of (Śiva's) attendants, the demon army was dispersed

like the scattered heap of grass struck by the speed of wind. (Śiva's) attendants seeing the demon army broken, rejoiced.

27-32. The three very powerful ones—the two generals viz. Niśumbha and Śumbha and the brave Kālanemi—warded off the army of the attendants. They discharged arrows as clouds (discharge water) in the rainy season. Then the volleys of arrows of (i.e. discharged by) the demons, like swarms of locusts, blocked the sky and all directions, and they made the entire army of (Śiva's) attendants tremble. The attendants pierced by hundreds of arrows and shedding showers of blood appeared like kiṁśuka (trees) in spring season. Nothing could be clearly seen. Then (Śiva's) attendants fell, were knocked down, cut off and pierced. Leaving the battlefield, they all turned back. Then Gajānana, lordly Nandin and Kārtikeya, overpowered for long, seeing their army broken and unable to stand (the demon-force) forcibly warded off the excellent demons.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED ONE

The Fight Goes On

Nārada said:

1-19. Those demons on seeing the chiefs of the attendants like Nandin, Gajānana and Kārtikeya, impatiently ran (to them) for duels. Kālanemi, Śumbha and Niśumbha, (each) equipped with an armor, speedily ran (respectively) to Nandin, Gajānana and Kārtikeya. With five arrows Niśumbha pierced Kārtikeya's peacock on his chest with speed and he fell down unconscious. Then, when the angry Kārtikeya took his (missile called) śakti, Niśumbha forcibly knocked him down with śakti. Then Nandīśvara pierced Kālanemi with arrows. With seven he pierced his horses and banners, and with three his charioteer. Kālanemi who was angry, cut off Nandin's bow. Throwing it off, he firmly struck him on his chest with a spear. He, with his chest pierced by a spear and with his horses and charioteer killed, took off

the mountain's peak and threw it at Nandin. Then Śumbha and Gajānana, having a chariot and a rat as their vehicles, fighting with each other, pierced each other with volleys of arrows. The lord of the attendants (i.e. Gajānana) struck Śumbha in his heart with an arrow and knocked on the ground his charioteer with five arrows. Then Śumbha, being extremely angry, pierced Gajānana with sixty arrows, (his) rat with three, and thundered like a cloud. The rat, with his limbs pierced with arrows, walked painfully. Gajānana got down (from the rat) and became a foot soldier, O king. Then Gajānana, having struck Śumbha on his chest with a spear, knocked him down on the ground, and again mounted the rat. Kālanemi and Niśumbha both simultaneously struck Gajānana through anger with arrows, like a great elephant with a goad. Seeing him being troubled, the very strong Vīrabhadra, along with a crore of imps, speedily ran (to him). Kuṣmāṇḍas, Bhairavas, vampires, goblins, bevies of witches and (other) attendants followed him. Then the earth, resounding with kilakila sound (expressing joy), roars like those of lions, growlings, (beatings of) drums, trembled. Then the imps ran and devoured the demons. They jumped and fell and danced on the battlefield. Nandin and Kārtikeya hurriedly came (there) and struck the demons with continuous volleys of arrows in the battle. The army, cut off and broken with the demons killed, knocked down and threatened (by the attendants) was perplexed, and had a dejected face at that time.

20-31. Seeing (his) army destroyed, the strong son of the Ocean, in a chariot with a superior banner, marched against the attendants. Then in both the armies there were loud noise, sound of conches and drums, and roars like those of lions. Then with volleys of arrows, as with covers of mist, Jalandhara blocked the space between heaven and earth. Piercing Gajānana with five (arrows), Nandin too with five, and Vīrabhadra with twenty, he thundered like a cloud. Then Kārtikeya quickly pierced the demon with his (missile called) śakti. Pierced with the śakti he, with his mind a little agitated, rolled about. Then, with his eyes full of anger Jalandhara struck Kārtikeya with a mace. He too fell on the ground. In the same way he speedily knocked down Nandin on the ground. Then the angry Gajānana cut off his mace with his axe. Vīrabhadra pierced the demon on his chest with

three arrows, and cut off with seven (arrows) his horses, banners and concealed bow. Then the very angry lord of demons raising a fierce śakti, knocked down Gajānana and got into another chariot. Then, full of anger, he speedily marched against Vīrabhadra. Then the two, resembling the sun, fought with each other. Vīrabhadra knocked down his horses with arrows. The lord of demons cut off (his) bow, and with an iron bar as his weapon, fought. That demon, quickly attacking Vīrabhadra, struck him on his head with an iron club. The demon too, with his head pierced, and ejecting blood, fell on the ground.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWO

Jalandhara Plays a Trick

Nārada said:

1-12. Seeing that Vīrabhadra fallen, Rudra's attendants leaving the battle through fear and crying came to Śiva. Then hearing the uproar of his attendants, Śiva having mounted on his bull and laughing a little, came to the battle. Seeing Śiva coming, the attendants roaring like lions, again returned (to the battlefield). In the battle they struck the demons with showers of arrows. All the demons, seeing the fierce Śiva, ran away as sins run away through fear on seeing him who observes the vow of Kārtika. Then Jalandhara, seeing the demons fleeing on the battlefield, angrily ran to Śiva and discharged thousands of arrows. Śumbha, Niśumbha, Aśvamukha, Kālanemi, Balāhaka, Khaḍgaroman, Pracaṇḍa and Ghasmara went (i.e. rushed) to Śiva. Śiva, seeing the army of his attendants covered with the darkness caused by the arrows (of the demons), cut off the volley of arrows and with his own arrows covered the sky. He then troubled the demons with the hurricanes of his arrows. With fierce and continuous volleys of arrows he knocked (them) on the ground. Similarly he angrily cut off the head of Khaḍgaroman with a battle-axe. With a club having a skull at the top he also cut into two Balāhaka's head; and binding the demon

Ghasmara with a noose, he knocked him down on the ground. Some were struck by the bull; some were driven away by the arrows. The demons, like elephants tormented by lions, could not stand (before Śiva). Then Jalandhara with his mind full of anger and a voice sharp like (the sound of) thunderbolt, quickly challenged (Śiva) in the battle.

Jalandhara said:

13. Fight with me today. What is the use of striking these? O you having matted hair, show me whatever might you have.

Nārada said:

14-27. Speaking like this he struck Śiva with seventy arrows. He, laughing a little, cut them off before they reached (him) with sharp arrows. Then with seven (arrows) he cut off his horses, banners, umbrella and bow. He the powerful one, with his bow cut off and without his chariot, took a mace. Śiva ran (to him) and cut into two his mace with arrows. Yet, raising his fist he went to kill Śiva. (Just) then Śiva drove him away up to a krośa with the volleys of arrows. Then the demon Jalandhara, thinking Śiva to be stronger, created a gāndharvī illusion which was wonderful, and deluded Śiva. Then gandharvas and bevies of celestial nymphs sang and danced. They sounded musical instruments made of bell-metal, lutes and tabors with one another. Seeing that great wonder Rudra was deluded by the sound, and he did not even notice weapons dropped from his hands. The demon seeing Rudra concentrated, was overpowered by sexual desire, quickly went where Pārvatī was seated, after putting the very strong Śumbha and Niśumbha in (charge of) the battle. That Jalandhara became one having ten staff-like arms, five faces, three eyes, matted hair, and mounted upon a mighty bull. Then seeing Rudra coming, his beloved came from among her friends, and remained within the range of his sight. When the lord of demons saw Pārvatī of a charming body, he ejected his semen and his body became dull. Then Pārvatī, recognising him to be the demon, was overcome by fear, and vanished and went to Uttaramānasa. Not seeing her in a moment like a streak of lighting, he again quickly went to the battle(-field) where god Śiva stood. Then Pārvatī also

mentally recollected the great Viṣṇu. Then the goddess saw him seated by her.

Pārvatī said:

28. O Viṣṇu, the demon Jalandhara has done a great wonder. Do you not know the act of that wicked-minded (demon)?

The lord said:

29. We are following the path shown by him only. Otherwise, he well-protected by (his wife's) chastity would not be fit to be killed.

Nārada said:

30-32. Speaking like this, Viṣṇu again went to Jālandhara city. And Śiva, followed by gandharvas remained in the battle. Seeing the illusion to have disappeared, he awoke. Then Śiva, with his mind amazed, again angrily went to fight Jalandhara. The demon too seeing Śiva to have come back again, covered him with volleys of arrows in the battle.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THREE

Vṛndā Curses Viṣṇu

Nārada said:

1-12. Viṣṇu having gone to Jālandhara broke through his cover and decided to break (i.e. spoil) the vow of chastity of Vṛndā. Respectable Vṛndārakā saw in her dream her husband mounted upon a buffalo, smeared with oil, naked, adorned with black flowers, and waited upon by groups of eaters of raw flesh, (saw him as) having gone to the southern direction clean-shaved and covered with darkness. (She saw) her city plunged into the ocean with herself. Then the young lady, (trying to) ascertain (the meaning of) her dream, awoke. She repeatedly saw the sun that had risen, as having holes and steady. Know-

ing it to be undesirable, she, overcome by fear and weeping did not find pleasure at the principal gate and upper story. Then with two (of her) friends she went to the city-garden. The young lady, even after having gone there, did not get pleasure anywhere. Going from forest to forest, she was not at all aware of herself. Then the young lady who was wandering, saw two demons very fierce, having lion-like faces, and fierce fangs and eyes. Seeing them, she being extremely alarmed, became wholly engaged in running. She saw a calm ascetic observing silence with his disciples. Then putting, through fear, her creeper-like arm round his neck she said: "O sage, protect me who have sought your shelter." The sage, seeing her alarmed and followed by the demons, angrily turned away the fierce demons just with a *hum* sound. Vṛndā, seeing them to have gone to the sky due to his *hum* sound, fell (i.e. prostrated herself) on the ground like a staff and spoke (these) words:

Vṛndā said:

13-14. O you treasure of compassion, you have protected me from a terrible fear. So I desire to say something respectfully. Kindly listen to it. O lord, O you of a good vow, my husband Jalandhara has gone to fight with Rudra. Tell me how he is (faring) in the battle.

Nārada said:

15-18. The sage having heard the words looked about with compassion. Just then two lordly monkeys came and saluting him stood before him. Then ordered by the indication of his creeper-like brows, they went to the sky. Having gone, the monkeys returned within half a moment and stood before him. Seeing them having in their hands the head and trunk of the Ocean's son, she, afflicted by the grief for her husband, fell unconscious on the ground. She was sprinkled over with the water from the pitcher and was brought back to consciousness by the sage. Putting her forehead on that of her husband, she, being dejected, wept.

Vṛndā said:

19-20. O lord, how is it that you who formerly amused me

with pleasing news, are not talking to me, your innocent beloved. How is it that you, the conqueror of the three worlds, who vanquished gods with gandharvas and Indra, were killed by an ascetic (i.e. Śiva)?

Nārada said:

21a. Thus weeping, Vṛndā said (these) words to the sage.

Vṛndā said:

21b-22. O you treasure of penance, O best sage, his life is very dear to me. I think you alone are capable of bringing him back to life.

Hearing her words the sage laughed and said:

The sage said:

23. It is not possible to bring back to life him who is killed by Śiva in a battle. Yet full of pity for you, I shall revive him.

Nārada said:

24-26. Speaking like this, when he just vanished, just then the Ocean's son, with his mind pleased, embraced and kissed Vṛndā. Then Vṛndā too seeing her husband, delighted in mind; she lived in the forest with him, and enjoyed with him for many days. Once, at the end of the coitus seeing him to be Viṣṇu only, Vṛndā getting angry censured him and spoke (these) words:

Vṛndā said:

27-31. O Viṣṇu, fie upon the conduct of you, molesting another's wife! I have recognized you to be actually an illusory ascetic. The two door-keepers of you whom you showed me through your Māyā (illusion), shall become demons and kidnap your wife. You too, afflicted with the grief due to your wife and assisted by the monkeys wander in the forest with him, the lord of all who has become your disciple.

Speaking like this, Vṛndā, though prohibited by Viṣṇu, not having any mental attachment for him, entered fire. Then Viṣṇu,

repeatedly remembering her, and having covered himself with the ash of Vṛndā's funeral pyre, remained there only; and though advised by the groups of sages and siddhas, did not obtain peace.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FOUR

The End of Jalandhara

Nārada said:

1-15a. Then Jalandhara seeing Śiva having wonderful valour, fashioned (an) illusory (form of) Pārvatī to delude Śiva. At that time Śiva saw her mounted upon the chariot, weeping, and being killed by Śumbha, Niśumbha and other demons. Seeing Pārvatī like that, Śiva too, with his mind dejected, remained silent with his face hung down and forgetting his valour. Then Jalandhara speedily pierced Śiva in his head, chest and belly with arrows plunging up to their feathered ends. Then being instructed by Viṣṇu, he realised the illusion. He became one having a fierce form, very fierce due to a series of flames. Seeing his extremely fierce form, the demons could not stand before him and took to the ten directions. Then the god gave a curse to Śumbha and Niśumbha: "After having gone away from the battle with me, you will be killed by Pārvatī." Again Jalandhara speedily showered (Śiva) with sharp arrows, so that a great surface of the earth was covered with darkness due to the arrows. While Rudra quickly cut off his arrows, the mighty one quickly struck the bull (Nandin) with an iron bar. Due to that stroke, the bull turned away from the battlefield. Though dragged by Śiva, he did not remain on the battlefield. Then Śiva having a fierce form, and very angry, speedily discharged the Sudarśana disc, bright like the sun. Reaching Jalandhara speedily, it burnt heaven and earth. It took (i.e. cut) off his head with big, long eyes from his body. Resounding the earth his body fell from the chariot; and from his body a lustre came out and merged into Śiva's body. Seeing the lustre coming

out from his body and merging into (the body of) Śiva, gods like Indra with their eyes blooming with joy, saluted Śiva with their heads (bent down) and told him about Viṣṇu's act.

The gods said:

15b-16. O Śiva, you have protected the gods from fear of the enemy. Something else has come up. What should we do there? Deluded by Vṛndā's beauty, Viṣṇu is stupefied.

The lord said:

17. O gods, to remove Viṣṇu's delusion resort to the fascinating Māyā, fit to be resorted to. She will do your work.

Nārada said:

18. Saying so, the god along with the imps and attendants vanished; and gods praised the Mūlā Prakṛti (literally, the original source) to whom the devotees were dear.

The gods said:

19-21. We bow to that pure (cause called) Prakṛti, from which the constituents, sattva (goodness), rajas (activity) and tamas (darkness or ignorance) have come up, which is the primary cause of creation, maintenance and destruction (of the world), by whose desire all this existence and non-existence is spread. O lady with benumbing missiles, the twentythree divisions (principles), that formerly remained in the entire world, are the forms and acts of that (i.e. of you). We bow to her. We bow to that nature of Viṣṇu, which always loves the devotees, and men devoted to whom never meet with poverty, delusion, defeat etc.

Nārada said:

22-29. To him, who, with a concentrated mind, recites this hymn thrice a day, poverty, delusion, difficulties never touch (i.e. come). Those gods who were praising like this, saw in the sky, (Māyā) abiding in an orb of lustre and pervading the atmosphere with a series of flames. They all saw Bhāratī moving in the sky from its midst: "I alone, divided in three ways, remain

with the three constituents. (My three forms are) Gaurī, Lakṣmī and Svarā (respectively endowed) with sattva, rajas and tamas. Go there, O gods; they will do your work."

Nārada said:

O king, when the gods with their eyes blooming with joy due to amazement, were hearing like this, the lustre disappeared. Then all the gods prompted by those words went and, greatly devoted, saluted Gaurī, Lakṣmī and Svarā. O king, then they, loving their devotees, saw the gods bowing down (to them), gave them seeds and said (these) words:

The goddesses said:

Sow these seeds in that place where Viṣṇu remains. Then your undertaking will succeed.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIVE

The Greatness of Dhātrī and Tulasī

Nārada said:

1-15. O best king, from the seeds that were thrown (i.e. sown) there, three plants came up: Dhātrī, Mālatī and Tulasī. Dhātri is said to have come up from Dhātrī (the earth), Mālatī from Lakṣmī, and Tulasī from Gaurī (having) the qualities (constituents viz.) sattva (goodness), rajas (activity) and tamas (darkness, ignorance). O king, Viṣṇu, deluded by the excellence of Vṛndā's beauty, seeing the herbs in the form of women got up in confusion. Then, with his mind attached to (i.e. full of) passion, he saw them. Tulasī and Dhātrī also looked at him with love only. Since formerly Lakṣmī gave the seed deceptively, therefore, the woman who came up from it, became jealous of him. Therefore, she is called Barbarī (i.e. low), and is very much condemned by Viṣṇu. Due to his love for them Dhātrī and Tulasī have always delighted him. Then Viṣṇu, forgetting his grief, went to Vaikuṇṭha with them. He was delighted and

was saluted by all gods. Therefore, Viṣṇu's worship is ordained at the time of the conclusion of the Kārtika (vow), since it is said always to cause delight (when done) at the root of Tulasī. O king, the house of him in whose house stands a Tulasī-grove, is of the nature of a holy place. Yama's servants do not come (there). Those best men who plant a Tulasī-grove which destroys all sins, which is auspicious, which satisfies desires, never see (Yama) the Sun's son. The three, viz. seeing (i.e. visiting) Narmadā, bathing in Gaṅgā, and contact with Tulasī-grove, are said to be equivalent. Due to men's planting, protecting, sprinkling, seeing and touching Tulasī, Tulasī removes their sin committed through speech, mind and body. He who would worship Viṣṇu with Tulasī-blossoms, does not go to the abode of embryo (i.e. is not reborn), and gets salvation. There is no doubt about this. In the Tulasī-leaf live holy places like Puṣkara, so also rivers like Gaṅgā and gods like Viṣṇu. O best king, if a man dies with a Tulasī-leaf (on his person), he obtains absorption with Viṣṇu. This is the truth (and the only) truth.

16-29. Even Yama cannot look at him, even though he is full of hundreds of sins, who dies with Tulasī-clay smeared (on his body). He who would put on the sandal from Tulasī-wood, great sin, though committed by him, does not touch his body. O king, a man should offer śrāddha wherever there would be the shade of a Tulasī-grove. (Śrāddha) offered there becomes inexhaustible for the manes of the dead ancestors. The dead ancestors in hell, of him who offers piṇḍas under the shade of a Tulasī-plant, are gratified, O best king. He who keeps the Dhātrī-fruit on his head, in his hand, in his mouth, on his body, should be known to be Viṣṇu himself, O best king. He on whose body the Dhātrī-fruit or clay (from the root) of Tulasī from Dvārakā always remains, is called 'liberated while alive.' The fruit for that man who bathes with water mixed with Dhātrī-fruits or with Tulasī-leaves, is said to be like that of a bath in Gaṅgā. The man who would worship the deities with Dhātrī-leaves or Dhātrī-fruits, would obtain the fruit of worshipping them with various flowers (made) of gold. In Kārtika when the Sun has resorted to the Libra sign of the Zodiac, holy places, sages, deities, sacrifices always remain resorted to the Dhātrī. One who plucks a Tulasī-leaf on the twelfth day, and a Dhātrī-

fruit in Kārtika, would go to very condemned hells. The sin due to contact with (prohibited) food, of the man who eats under the shade of a Dhātrī plant in Kārtika, perishes for the (whole) year. One who worships Viṣṇu (while sitting) at the root of a Dhātrī plant in Kārtika, has always worshipped at all places sacred to Viṣṇu. Even the god (Brahmā) having four mouths would not be able to narrate the greatness of Dhātrī and Tulasī as of god Viṣṇu. One who devoutly listens to or causes (others) to listen to the cause of the origin of Dhātrī and Tulasī, has his sins shaken off, and he, seated in an excellent aeroplane with his ancestors, goes to heaven.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIX

The Kalahā Episode

Pṛthu said:

1-2. O brāhmaṇa, you told me properly the greatness of Tulasī along with its history. I have listened to this great, very wonderful (account). Tell (me) what great fruit a man gets, who observes the Kārtika vow; (tell) its greatness again. (Tell) also who observed it? and in what manner (did he observe it)?

Nārada said:

3-10. Formerly in the region of Sahyādri in the city of Karavīra there lived a brāhmaṇa known as Dharmadatta, a knower of Dharma. He always observed Viṣṇu's vow and was always engaged in worshipping Viṣṇu. He was fond of muttering the hymn of the twelve syllables and guests were dear to him. Once in the month of Kārtika he went to Viṣṇu's temple for keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, when the fourth part of the night had remained. When he was taking the materials for Viṣṇu's worship, he saw a demoness of a terrible voice, that had come there. Her fangs and face were crooked; her tongue had gone down; her eyes were red; she was naked; the flesh (in her body) was dry (i.e. she was emaciated); her lips were long

(i.e. protruding); her voice was purring. Seeing her, he, afflicted with fear and with limbs trembling, quickly struck her with the materials of worship and water. She was (thus) struck (by him) after remembering Viṣṇu's name and with Tulasī-water. Therefore, all her sin perished. Then she, remembering her former existence due to the maturity of her acts, told him her entire condition, after saluting him (by prostrating before him) like a staff.

Kalahā said:

11. I have been reduced to this condition as a result of my deeds in the former (existence). O brāhmaṇa, how shall I again attain excellent and auspicious condition?

Nārada said:

12. Seeing her bowing down before (him) and narrating those acts of her, the brāhmaṇa, extremely amazed, then said (these) words:

Dharmadatta said:

13. As a result of which act are you reduced to such a condition? Wherefrom (do you come)? Who are you? What is your disposition? Tell all that to me.

Kalahā said:

14-18a. O brāhmaṇa, in a city in Saurāṣṭra there was a brāhmaṇa named Bhikṣu. I was first his very cruel wife named Kalahā. I never did good to him even by words; I who broke his command and who always liked to quarrel, never gave sweet food to my husband. Then the brāhmaṇa was dejected through grief; that my husband thought of marrying another woman. Then, O brāhmaṇa, taking poison, I cast off my life. Then Yama's followers bound me and took me away. And Yama seeing me then, asked Citragupta.

Yama said:

18b-19. O Citragupta, see what act she has done. Let her obtain good or bad fruit of her act.

Then Citragupta, censuring her, said (these) words:

Citragupta said:

20-25. She has not done any good act at all. She (herself) ate savoury food, (but) did not give it to her husband. Therefore, let her be (born) in her own feces in the stock of a cockroach. Then, O Hari, she, who hated her husband and always quarrelled, will be (born) in the stock of a female pig eating feces. Since she always ate from the pot in which the food is cooked, (let her be born) among female-cats eating her own young ones. Since she killed herself with reference to her husband, therefore, let this extremely censured one live among ghosts and goblins. Then with the demons she should be taken to the Maru country. Let her, having a ghosts' body, stay there for a long time. Thus having undergone (i.e. passed through) three stocks (i.e. existences) (she will be) doing auspicious acts.

Kalahā said:

26-31. That I (i.e. like that I) remained for five hundred years in a ghost's body. Everyday I was oppressed by hunger and thirst and was afflicted due to my own act(s). Then I, oppressed by hunger everyday, (resorted to) a merchant's body and came to the confluence of Kṛṣṇā and Veṇī in the southern country. When I resorted to that bank, I was forcibly thrown away from that body(?) by the attendants of Śiva and Viṣṇu. Then, O brāhmaṇa, I who was emaciated with hunger, who was wandering, and whose sin had gone away due to the contact of the Tulasī-water thrown (by you), saw you. Therefore, O best brāhmaṇa, have pity on me. How shall I be free from the three very fearful existences, and from this ghost's body?

Hearing like this the words of Kalahā, the brāhmaṇa, full of affliction and amazement due to the maturity of her acts, and with his mind restless due to having seen her misery thought for a long time, and sorrowfully spoke (these) words:

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVEN

Kalahā Is Emancipated

Dharmadatta said:

1-5. By means of (visits to) holy places, gifts and vows etc. sins perish. But you, remaining in an imp's body are not entitled to them. My mind dejected at seeing this misery of you will not be pleased without emancipating you who are unhappy. Your sin, giving you the three existences as a result of its maturity, is very grave. It cannot be exhausted by other meritorious acts. The state of an imp is very censurable. Therefore, obtain a good condition by means of half the merit of the Kārtika vow observed by me from my birth. Sacrifices, gifts, (visits to) holy places and vows certainly do not at all have the equivalence to the merit due to the Kārtika vow.

Nārada said:

6-8. Speaking like this, when Dharmadatta sprinkled her with water mixed with Tulasī, repeating the twelve-syllabled (hymn), (just) then she was free from imphood, resembled the flame of a blazing fire, had a divine form, and brightened up the directions with her beauty. Then she saluted the brāhmaṇa (by prostrating herself) like a staff on the ground, and in a voice stammering with joy, said (these) words:

Kalahā said:

9. O you best brāhmaṇa, due to your favour I have been free from hell. Certainly you have been (the emancipator) of me who was drowning in the ocean of sin.

Nārada said:

10-13. She who was talking like this to the brāhmaṇa saw a bright aeroplane with attendants having Viṣṇu's form coming from the sky. Then two righteous door-keepers of good conduct put her into that excellent aeroplane attended upon by a band of celestial nymphs. Dharmadatta saw that aeroplane and was amazed. Seeing the two meritorious ones he fell on the ground like a staff. The two righteous ones of good conduct, raised the

brāhmaṇa who had bowed down, and praising him spoke (these) words:

The two attendants said:

14-26. It's good, O best brāhmaṇa, that you are always devoted to Viṣṇu, you are kind to the helpless, you know Dharma and are very much engrossed in Viṣṇu's vow. From your birth you observed this Kārtika vow. By giving half of (the religious merit due to) it her sins collected formerly in hundreds of existences, have perished. Due to your keeping awake in honour of Viṣṇu etc. this aeroplane has come; so also (have come) the residence in Vaikuṇṭha, proximity of Viṣṇu, and absorption into him. Those who have devoutly propitiated Viṣṇu as you have done, O Dharmadatta, are lucky and contented. Their existence is fruitful. What will Viṣṇu who formerly put Uttāna's son (Dhruva) at a fixed place, and by merely remembering whose name human beings get good position, not give to human beings, when he is properly propitiated? Formerly the lordly elephant seized by a crocodile became free by (merely) remembering his name, obtained his proximity and became one called 'Jaya' (i.e. came to be called Jaya). Therefore, Viṣṇu worshipped by you will give you with your two wives his proximity for many thousand years. Then, after your religious merit is exhausted, when you will go to the earth, you will be a famous king born in the solar dynasty named Daśaratha with your two wives and with this one as the third (wife) sharing half of your religious merit. There on the earth also Viṣṇu doing the work of the gods, will give you his proximity after having made himself (i.e. born as) your son. For you sacrifices, gifts, visits to holy places are not superior to this your vow (taken) from your birth and pleasing Viṣṇu. O brāhmaṇa, you are lucky that you have observed this vow pleasing the lord of the world, due to the fruit of the half portion of which this one is being taken by us to the same world as of Viṣṇu.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED EIGHT

King Cola and Brāhmaṇa Viṣṇudāsa

Nārada said:

1. Hearing her words like this, Dharmadatta, being amazed, bowed on the ground (i.e. prostrated himself) like a staff and said these words:

Dharmadatta said:

2-3. By means of sacrifices, gifts, vows, (visits to) holy places, austerities, all devotees properly propitiate Viṣṇu who removes affliction. (Tell me) that which pleases Viṣṇu and which brings about proximity of Viṣṇu and having done which all those are done.

The two attendants said:

4-13. O brāhmaṇa, you have asked well. Listen with a concentrated mind to a story, with its history, which took place in olden times and which is being told (by us). Formerly in Kāntipura there lived an emperor Cola after whom, it is said, the country was called Cola. While he was ruling over the globe, no man was poor, unhappy, of a sinful design or diseased. Of him, performing many sacrifices (i.e. while he was performing many sacrifices), both the banks of the Tāmraparṇī (river) were full of beauty with golden sacrificial posts resembling Caitraratha (Kubera's garden). Once, O brāhmaṇa, that king went to Anantaśayana where this lord of the three worlds resorts to sleep. There the king having duly worshipped god Viṣṇu with divine gems, pearls, and beautiful golden flowers, saluted him (prostrating before him) like a staff and sat (there). When he was seated he saw a brāhmaṇa called Viṣṇudāsa, who had come with Tulasī-water in his hand for worshipping the god and living in his own city. Having come there, the brāhmaṇa-sage worshipped the god of gods after having bathed him with Tulasī blossoms and leaves and with (the recital of) the Viṣṇu-hymn. Seeing that the worship done (by him) with jewels (etc.), was covered with Tulasī (-leaves) etc. the got angry and spoke (these) words:

The king said:

14-16. O Viṣṇudāsa, how is it that the beautiful worship done by me with rubies and gold is covered with Tulasī-leaves by you? Since you cover this very beautiful worship offered by me, I think you do not know devotion to Viṣṇu and you are wretched.

Hearing these words, the best brāhmaṇa got angry, and transgressing (i.e. not caring for) the greatness of the king, said (these) words then:

Viṣṇudāsa said:

17. O king, you do not know salvation; you are proud of your wealth. Tell me which Viṣṇu-vow you have observed before.

The two attendants said:

18-22. O brāhmaṇa, hearing those words of the brāhmaṇa the best king laughed and proudly said these words to Viṣṇudāsa: "O brāhmaṇa, if, being very proud, you are telling like this, (tell me) how much devotion to Viṣṇu you poor and indigent one have. O brāhmaṇa, you have not offered sacrifices or gifts. Nor anywhere have you put up a temple before. If the pride of you who are like this persists due to your devotion, then may these best brāhmaṇas today hear my words. This dispute will go (i.e. cease). I shall have actual perception of Viṣṇu so that all these and you will realise our devotion."

The two attendants said:

23-30. Speaking like this, O brāhmaṇa, the king went to his palace; and making Mudgala the preceptor he commenced a sacrificial session (in honour) of Viṣṇu, at which hosts of sages had come and many presents were given, which was rich like the one offered formerly by Brahmā at Prayāga. Viṣṇudāsa, observing the vow, remained just there in the temple, always observing these five restraints pleasing Viṣṇu: observing properly the vow in Māgha and Kārtika, maintaining a Tulasī-grove, observing the Ekādaśī-vow, and muttering the twelve-syllabled hymn. So also everyday he worshipped Viṣṇu in the sixteen ways with auspicious (acts) like dancing and singing. (Thus) he observed these

vows. He, viewing all equally, always remembered Viṣṇu while walking, eating and even while sleeping, and saw Viṣṇu remaining (i.e. as present) in every being. He daily observed the special restraints in Māgha and Kārtika for pleasing Viṣṇu, so also their proper conclusion. When king Cola and Viṣṇudāsa, who were observing that vow, who had devoted their senses and acts to deeds for him (i.e. Viṣṇu), were thus propitiating (Viṣṇu) the lord of Lakṣmī, much time passed.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED NINE

King Cola and Viṣṇudāsa Become Attendants of Viṣṇu

The two attendants said:

1-13. When once the brāhmaṇa Viṣṇudāsa cooked (food) after having duly performed his daily rite, someone unnoticed took away (the food). The brāhmaṇa, not (being able to) see him, did not at all cook again through fear of violating the vow of his evening worship. On the next day, when he, after having cooked, was about to offer it to Viṣṇu, somebody again took it away. In this way, for seven days somebody (daily) took away the food, O brāhmaṇa. He was amazed and thought in his mind thus: 'Oh, who comes daily and takes away my food? This place of the holy ascetics is not at all to be abandoned by me. If, having cooked again, I eat (the food), then how can I give up the evening worship (of the deity)? I shall not eat after cooking some food. A devotee of Viṣṇu does not eat without offering everything to Viṣṇu. How can I again remain in (i.e. observe) this vow by fasting? Today I shall properly guard the food.' Thinking thus he cooked the food and remained there unnoticed. Just then he saw a cāṇḍāla ready to take away the cooked food. He was emaciated with hunger, his face was melancholy, and only bones and skin were left (in his body). Seeing him, the best brāhmaṇa had his mind distressed with pity. Seeing the (cāṇḍāla) stealing the food, the brāhmaṇa said, "Wait, wait. How do you

eat the dry food? Have this ghee." Seeing the best brāhmaṇa speaking like this and coming (near him), he, through fear, ran fast, and dropped down unconscious. That best brāhmaṇa, seeing the cāṇḍāla frightened and unconscious, speedily approached him and fanned him with the ends of his garment through compassion (for him).

14-21. Viṣṇudāsa saw him who got up, to be actually god Viṣṇu holding a conch, a disc, and a mace, (and) wearing a yellow garment, having four arms, having the mark of Śrīvatsa, wearing a crown, and having his chest marked with Kaustubha resembling atasī flower. Seeing him, the best brāhmaṇa was full of good thoughts. At that time he was unable to praise and salute him. Then gods like Indra came there at that time; and gandharvas and celestial nymphs gladly sang and danced. At that time the place was crowded with hundreds of aeroplanes and it resounded with the sounds of songs and musical instruments. Then Viṣṇu, having embraced his virtuous devotee, gave him absorption into himself and took him to Vaikuṇṭha. King Cola who was initiated (for a sacrifice) saw Viṣṇudāsa seated in the excellent aeroplane in the vicinity of Viṣṇu. Seeing Viṣṇudāsa going to Viṣṇu's abode, he quickly called his preceptor Mudgala and thus spoke to him:

Cola said:

22-25. That brāhmaṇa vying with whom I performed that sacrifice etc., is, after taking up Viṣṇu's form, going to Viṣṇu's abode. I who was initiated for this sacrificial session, offered oblations into fire through you and made the brāhmaṇas completely (happy) in their minds through gifts etc. That god yet does not certainly become pleased. (But) that Viṣṇu actually presented himself (before the brāhmaṇa) by his devotion. Therefore, Viṣṇu is not at all pleased by means of gifts and sacrifices. Devotion alone is the means of seeing that lord.

The two attendants said:

26-32. Saying so he consecrated his sister's son on the throne. Since from his childhood he was initiated for the sacrifice, he was sonless. Therefore, even now in his kingdom sisters' sons only, continuing the convention followed (previo-

usly) become heir to the kingdom. Then going to the place of the sacrifice, and standing before the hole made for receiving the sacrificial fire, addressing Viṣṇu, he loudly spoke (these words) three times: "O Viṣṇu, give me a stable devotion through acts of mind, speech and body." Saying like this he fell into the fire, when all were watching. Then Mudgala angrily extracted the tuft of hair on the crown of his head. Since then, even up to this day the Mudgalas are without the tuft of hair on the crowns on their heads. Just then Viṣṇu, loving his devotees, appeared in the fire in the hole made for receiving the sacrificial fire. Viṣṇu embraced him and put him into an excellent aeroplane. Having embraced him and assimilated him into himself, the lord of gods, surrounded by gods, went to his abode in Vaikuṇṭha with him.

Nārada said:

33. That Viṣṇu dear to Lakṣmī, made the two having similar forms, his doorkeepers. He who was Viṣṇudāsa became Puṇyaśīla (by name), and he who was king Cola became Suśīla by name.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TEN

The Story of Jaya and Vijaya

Dharmadatta said:

1. I have heard that Jaya and Vijaya are Viṣṇu's doorkeepers. (But I do not know) what they did due to which they had these forms.

The two attendants said:

2-14. Due to just being seen by Kardama, Devahūtī, Tṛṇabindu's daughter, formerly gave birth to two sons, O brāhmaṇa. The elder one was Jaya by name, and the younger Vijaya. On (i.e. from) the other wife was born Kapila, a knower of yoga, and Dharma. Jaya and Vijaya were always engrossed in devotion

to Viṣṇu. Controlling their senses, they were disposed to virtue. Everyday they both recited the eight-syllabled hymn and observed the Viṣṇu-vow. Viṣṇu always presented himself at their worship (of him). Sometime Marutta invited them for a sacrifice. They, skilled in performing a sacrifice, went there, being waited upon by divine sages. Jaya became the Brahmā priest and Vijaya the sacrificing priest. Then they fully accomplished the sacrificial rite. Marutta, after having bathed at the end of the sacrifice, gave them much wealth. Taking that wealth they went to their hermitage. O sage, then for worshipping and gratifying Viṣṇu they vied with each other and they divided the wealth. Jaya said: "Let it be divided into equal parts." Vijaya said: "Whatever is received by one is one's (share)." Then Jaya angrily and with his mind agitated, cursed Vijaya; "Since having received (the wealth) you are not giving it, therefore, be a crocodile." Vijaya too, having heard that curse of (i.e. pronounced by) him, cursed him: "Be an elephant", since he, erring due to arrogance had cursed him. Seeing lord Viṣṇu at the time of the daily worship, they told him like that. They solicited Lakṣmī's lord for rendering the curse ineffective. "O god, how shall we, your devotees, go to the stock of a crocodile and an elephant? O ocean of kindness, turn away that curse."

The lord said:

15-29. The words of my devotees shall never be untrue. I too can never change it. Formerly due to Prahlāda's words I appeared in a pillar. In the same way due to Ambarīṣa's words I arose on the way(?). Therefore, having certainly undergone these two curses pronounced by yourselves, obtain my eternal position.

Speaking like this, Viṣṇu vanished.

The two attendants said:

Then the crocodile and the elephant were (born) on the bank of Gaṇḍakī. Even in that state they remembered their (former) birth, and observed Viṣṇu-vow. Some time in Kārtika the elephant went to Gaṇḍakī to bathe. Just then, the crocodile remembering the cause of the curse seized him. The elephant

seized by the crocodile remembered Viṣṇu. Just then Viṣṇu, holding a conch, a disc, a mace appeared (there). Then the lord, throwing his disc, emancipated the crocodile and the elephant, and absorbing them into himself, took them to Vaikuṇṭha. Since then the place is known as Harikṣetra, where even (now) the stones bear the mark of the disc. Those two, O brāhmaṇa, known as Jaya and Vijaya, and dear to Viṣṇu, are his doorkeepers. Therefore, you too, O you who know piety, always observing Viṣṇu's vow and having given up jealousy and hypocrisy, view all equally. Always bathe in the morning (when the Sun is) in (the signs of) Libra, Capricornus and Aries, and maintaining a Tulasī-grove observe the Ekādaśī-vow. Always worship brāhmaṇas, cows, and Viṣṇu's devotees. Do not eat masūra (pulse), gruel made from fermentation of boiled rice and egg-plants. O Dharmadatta, by devotion to him (i.e. Viṣṇu) you too, on your death obtain that highest position of Viṣṇu, as we (have obtained). Sacrifices, gifts and (visits to holy places) are not superior to your vow (commenced) from birth and pleasing Viṣṇu. O best brāhmaṇa, you are lucky that you have observed this vow which gratifies the lord of the world, having got the fruit of which this meritorious one is taken by us to the world of Viṣṇu.

Nārada said:

30-32. Having thus instructed that Dharmadatta, the two, getting into the aeroplane, went with Kalahā to Viṣṇu's abode. Dharmadatta also, being convinced, observed the vow and on his death went, accompanied by his two wives, to that place of the lord. One who duly listens to his account which took place in ancient times, his mind, by the favour of the lord of the world, becomes disposed to reach Viṣṇu's proximity.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED ELEVEN

The Greatness of Kṛṣṇā and Veṇī

Pṛthu said:

1-2. You told (me) that formerly Kalahā came out of the body of the merchant on the bank (of the confluence) of Kṛṣṇā and Veṇī (and went) with the attendants of Śiva and Viṣṇu. (Now) O you who know Dharma, tell me about the greatness of the two rivers and that place. I have a curiosity about it.

Nārada said:

3-8a. Kṛṣṇā is actually the dark-bodied one, and Veṇī is god Śiva. (Even) the Four-faced (Brahmā) is not able to describe the greatness of their confluence. Yet, I shall tell you about their origin. Listen to it. Formerly in the age of Cākṣuṣa Manu, Manu's grandfather (i.e. Brahmā) was ready to perform a sacrifice on the charming peak of the Sahya mountain. Surrounded by hosts of all gods, and with Viṣṇu and Śiva, he after making the preparation for the sacrifice, went to the peak of that mountain. At the time (sacred to) god Brahmā (i.e. the early part of the day) the hosts of sages like Bhṛgu gathered there to initiate him. Then, through the brāhmaṇas Viṣṇu called the elder wife Svarā. When she was coming slowly, Bhṛgu said to Viṣṇu:

Bhṛgu said:

8b-9a. O Viṣṇu, you called Svarā; but she is not coming quickly. This is the transgression of the auspicious moment. How can the rite of initiation be done?

Viṣṇu said:

9b-10a. If Svarā is not coming quickly, then put Gāyatrī here (i.e. in her place). Can this wife of him also not join him in the meritorious deed?

Nārada said:

10b-13. Rudra also, in the same way, approved of Viṣṇu's words. That Bhṛgu, hearing those words, seated Gāyatrī to the right of Brahmā, and performed the rite of initiation. O king,

while they were duly performing the rite of initiation of Brahmā, Svarā came to the place of the sacrifice. Seeing Gāyatrī initiated with Brahmā, Svarā due to jealousy for her co-wife, angrily said (these) words:

Svarā said:

14-16. (When) those that do not deserve to be honoured, are honoured, and those that deserve to be honoured are ignored, three (inauspicious things) take place there: famine, death, fear. You have seated this younger one on my seat. Therefore, all of you, being devoid of consciousness will have various forms. Since she has sat on my seat, on the right (of Brahmā), therefore let her have a body of a river invisible to the people.

Nārada said:

17-18. Then hearing that curse, Gāyatrī trembled; and getting up, she, though restrained by gods, cursed that Svarā. "As Brahmā is your husband, so he is also mine. You have in vain cursed me. You too (will) become a river."

Nārada said:

19. Then all gods led by Śiva and Viṣṇu felt grief; saluting (by prostrating) like a staff on the ground, they requested Svarā:

The gods said:

20-21. O goddess, since you have cursed all of us like Brahmā, if we all become devoid of consciousness and turn into rivers, then these three worlds will certainly perish. You have acted imprudently. Therefore, withdraw this curse.

Svarā said:

22-24. O best gods, since at the commencement of the sacrifice you did not worship the lord of the attendants (i.e. Gaṇeśa), therefore this obstacle, due to my anger, has indeed come up. Nor again, these words of me will be untrue. Therefore, with your portions dulled, turn into rivers. We, the two co-wives, shall become two rivers, flowing into the west, by means of our portions, O gods.

Nārada said:

25-31. O king, then hearing her words Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva became dulled and turned into rivers just by means of their portions. Viṣṇu became Kṛṣṇā, and god Śiva Veṇī. Brahmā then separately became Gaṅgā having humps (of waves). The wise gods also, having dulled their portions, became good rivers separately (flowing) from the peaks of Sahya mountain. The best rivers, (formed) with the portions of gods, flowed into the east. Gāyatrī and Svarā joined together, flowing westward, came to be called Sāvitrī. Both Viṣṇu and Śiva appointed at that sacrifice, became (known) by the names Mahābala and Atibala. O king, I am not able to describe the greatness of the two rivers. Gods like Brahmā went (from the place) and remain, through their portions, as rivers. Every act of him who listens with devotion to this great (account of) Kṛṣṇā, removing sins or causes (others) to hear it, would become meritorious, and gets the fruit due to seeing her and bathing in her (water).

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWELVE

Portions of Merit and Demerit That Go to Others

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

1-5. Hearing these words of him, Pṛthu, with his mind amazed, devoutly honoured Nārada and allowed him to go, O dear one. Therefore, this triad of vows—the two in Māgha and Kārtika, and the one of Ekādaśī—is very dear to me. To me Tulasī among plants is dear, Kārtika among months is dear, Ekādaśī among days is dear, and Dvārakā among the holy places is dear. He who with his senses conquered resorts to these, becomes dear to me; not like that (i.e. so dear) with sacrifices etc. He who is devoted to these, should not, due to my grace, he afraid of sins as a rule.

Satyabhāmā said:

6-8. O lord what you told me, viz. that Kalahā was emancipated by the religious merit given by others, causes wonder. This month of Kārtika having such efficacy, is dear to you, since due to bath and (giving) gifts (in that month) sins like cheating one's master have gone (i.e. go). O lord, if one gets the religious merit given by another person, then in what way does a man get the religious merit not given to him?

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

9-29. Listen properly with which act men receive religious merit and sins not given to them. The region, the village and the families should have the portion of (the fruit of) acts etc. But in Kali-age only the doer gets the fruit of the religious merit or the sin. This arrangement is said (to obtain) even when no contact takes place. Know as to how religious merit and sins pass (to another person) through contact. Due to being paired together, going together, eating from the same pot, a man would duly get half the portion of religious merit or sin. A man always gets one-fourth portion of the religious merit or sin (of another person) through teaching, acting as a priest at a sacrifice, or eating (after sitting) in the same line. A man gets one-sixth portion of the religious merit or sin (of another) through (sitting on) the same seat, same vehicle, and due to the contact of (another man's) breath with his body. A man always gets one-tenth portion of the religious merit and sins (of another person) through touching (him), talking (to him) or praising (that) other person. A man would obtain one-hundredth portion of the religious merit or sin of another person by seeing, listening to, or thinking in his mind about him. He who censures another person, acts wickedly towards him or disregards him, gets (the fruit of) the sin committed by him, and gives him his own religious merit. A person, except the wife, a hired servant and a disciple of the man who does meritorious acts, serving him, and not getting the money in accordance with his service would also share the religious merit of him (who is served) in lieu of his service. A waiter at meals who ignores serving a man taking food after sitting

in the same line as others, would share one-sixth of his sin. He who, while bathing or performing sandhyā prayer etc., would touch or speak (with another person), would very certainly give one-sixth of his religious merit to that person. Another person who gives money to a person who asks for it for a religious purpose would get the fruit due to his (i.e. latter's) religious merit. He who performs a religious act after snatching another's wealth, incurs sin, and the fruit due to that (religious act) goes to the person having money (and giving it for the religious purpose). A rich man shares in proportion with his wealth the religious merit of the man who dies without repaying the money (borrowed from the rich man for the religious act). One who gives an idea, one who approves of it, one who gives the implement, one who compels, would obtain one-sixth portion of the religious merit or sin. A king would take out from his subjects one-sixth portion of their religious merit or sin. A preceptor would obtain half the portion of the religious merit from (i.e. of) his disciple; a husband (would obtain half the portion of the religious merit) of his wife, a father of his son, and a wife also (would obtain half the portion of the religious merit) of her husband. She, pleasing him, always behaves according to his mind (i.e. desire). The giver of a gift for the man who gives gifts with the hand of (i.e. through) another person, except a hired servant or his son, would extract one-sixth portion (of the religious merit of the donor). He who gives subsistence would extract one-sixth of the portion of him to whom the subsistence is given, provided he does not make him serve himself or any other (person).

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

30. In this way, the religious merit and sins earned by others, always go, though not given (to others). Listen to this excellent account, which is old, and which gives great religious merit.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTEEN

Dhaneśvara's Story

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

1-12. Formerly there was a brāhmaṇa named Dhaneśvara who lived in the city of Avantī. He had fallen from the status of a brāhmaṇa, was addicted to sins, and was very wicked. He sold liquor, blankets, hide, and behaved falsely. His mind was addicted to stealing, prostitutes, drinking and gambling. That Dhaneśvara, going from one region to another for selling (these articles), sometime went to Māhiṣmatī city. It was fashioned formerly by Mahiṣa. By its rampart shone Narmadā that destroyed sins. Seeing there men observing Kārtika-vow and coming from different directions, he, selling (his articles) stayed there for a month. He, everyday wandering on the bank of Narmadā for selling (his articles), saw brāhmaṇas who bathed (in the river) and were engaged in muttering hymns and worshipping deities. Everywhere Dhaneśvara, full of curiosity saw some men reciting a Purāṇa, some engaged in listening to it, some engaged in eulogising Viṣṇu with dancing, singing and musical instruments, some having marks (like a conch etc. in honour) of Viṣṇu, and some having on their persons garlands and Tulasī. He, wandering there everyday, due to seeing and coming in contact with Viṣṇu's devotees, heard the name of Viṣṇu etc. On his way he who resided there for a month, saw (people) keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu at the time of the concluding rite of Kārtika-vow. On the full-moon day he saw the worship of two kinds, so also presents and meals and offering of lights done by the observers of the vow. Then at the time of the sunset he saw the ceremony of illumination done for pleasing the enemy of Tripura (i.e. Śiva).

13-17a. Since on that day Śiva burnt the three cities (of Tripura), therefore, a great festival is celebrated by the devotees on that day. All the religious rites of him who would discriminate between me and Śiva, would undoubtedly be fruitless. That Dhaneśvara, seeing dance etc. there, wandered. Just then he was bitten by a black serpent and deprived of strength he dropped. Men seeing him fallen, and full of pity, surrounded

him. Then they sprinkled his face with water mixed with Tulasī. Then, when his body dropped (i.e. he died), Yama's servants bound him, and angrily tormented him with strokes of whips, and took him to Saṁyaminī (Yama's city). Seeing him Citragupta chided him and told Yama the bad deeds done by him from his childhood.

Citragupta said:

17b-19a. No good deed of (i.e. done by) him since his childhood is noticed. O Sun's son, his bad deeds cannot be described even in many years. O lord, this one appears to be just sin incarnate. Therefore, till the time of the final deluge he should be roasted in hell.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

19b-20a. Hearing these words, Yama showing his form resembling the fatal fire, angrily said to his servants:

Yama said:

20b-21a. O you who look after the dead, take him tormenting him with your iron clubs. Quickly put him into Kumbhīpāka (hell) having the sound of the boiling of oil.

21b-25a. When he was thrown there, Kumbhīpāka became cool, as when in olden times Prahlāda was thrown into it. Seeing that great wonder, the official looking after the dead was amazed. He speedily came and told it to Yama. Yama heard the curious thing told by the official looking after the dead. Saying, "Oh, what is it?" he thought (over it) properly. Just then Nārada, smiling, came there quickly. He was properly honoured by Yama after seeing him. He said these words:

Nārada said:

25b-34. O Sun's son, he is not fit to suffer in hells, since his acts are those that keep away hell. That man who would see, touch or talk to those who do meritorious acts, obtains one-sixth of the merit of those doing meritorious deeds. Since he had innumerable contacts with the observers of the Viṣṇu vow in Kārtika for a month, therefore he shares a portion of their

religious merit. Since he served them, he enjoys the entire religious merit of the vow. Therefore, his religious merit due to the Kārtika-vow cannot be measured, (since) Viṣṇu, to whom good devotees are dear, does destroy even the major sins of those who observe the Kārtika-vow. Since in the end (i.e. at the time of his death) he was favoured by Viṣṇu's devotees by repeating the names (of Viṣṇu) and by sprinkling water mixed with Tulasī (-leaves), therefore he is not be roasted in a hell. Therefore, with his sins destroyed, he deserves to get a good position. As due to deliberate or non-deliberate sins one has to suffer from torment in hell, in the same way one has to enjoy pleasures in heaven. Therefore, he who unintentionally got the religious merit, would, living in the stock of yakṣa, see all hells and would undergo the fruit of his sins.

When Nārada, after speaking like this left, Yama, realising his religious merit on hearing his (i.e. Nārada's) words, again took the brāhmaṇa through his servant showing him all groups of hell.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FOURTEEN

The Seven Hells Shown to Dhaneśvara

Śri Kṛṣṇa said:

1. Then Yama's servant, the official looking after the dead, took Dhaneśvara and showed him all hells.

The official looking after the dead said:

2-24. O Dhaneśvara, see all these very fearful hells into which sinners are always roasted by Yama's servants. This hell, appearing fearful, is called Taptavāluka in which those sinners whose bodies are burnt, cry. Those men who do not honour the guests emaciated with hunger, who have come to their house after having made an offering to all deities, are roasted here due to their acts. Those who have kicked the preceptor, fire, brāh-

maṇas, deities, those that are crowned, have their feet burnt. This hell has six divisions, and is reached by those who have committed various sins. Similarly this is the great hell (called) Andhatāmisra. O brāhmaṇa, see the body (of a man) due to his sinful act, is being pierced by insects of fierce mouths that have come in contact with him. This also has six divisions. In them sinful human beings are roasted with their vitals pierced by horses, crows, beasts and birds. The third hell is Krakaca, appearing fierce, where the sinful human beings are cut with swords. It has six divisions like (the one having) the Asipatra-grove. Those men who separate (others) from their wives, sons etc., so also with other beloved persons, are roasted here. The sinners, crying and running here and there through fear of being cut with blades of swords, are roasted here. See (them). This fourth hell is called Argala. See. Those sinners, being bound by Yama's servants with various kinds of nooses, and being killed with iron clubs, are crying here. Those sinful men who oppose good men and brāhmaṇas in this world are roasted here after their necks etc. are seized by Yama's servants. This also is a hell having six divisions like Vadha, etc. See this fifth hell called Kūṭaśālmalī, where, O brāhmaṇa, there are śālmalī and other trees resembling charcoal, where those men who are always engaged in adultery, snatching others' wealth and treachery, are roasted cruelly in six ways. See this sixth wonderful hell (called) Raktapūya where men committing sins are roasted with their faces turned down. These have eaten prohibited articles, and were engaged in censuring others and wickedness. Being pierced and killed, they are crying in fearful tones. This also is having bad smells of six kinds. O Dhaneśvara, see this seventh hell appearing fierce and called Kumbhīpāka. It is divided into six by means of articles like oil. Here great sinners are, for many thousand years, boiled by plunging them and taking them out (of the oil) by Yama's servants. These Raurava hells are said to be forty plus two. See them. A non-deliberate sin is called *śuṣka*, and a deliberate one *ārdra*. The hells are of two kinds depending upon the two varieties, ārdra and śuṣka. They have eightyfour separate divisions. That which is of a non-specific or general nature, resulting in a person's not being allowed to dine in the same line, and arising from pollution, and

resulting in one's exclusion from his caste is said to be a minor sin.

25-26. A very heinous sin[1] is a major sin said to be divided into seven divisions. One by one they are roasted in these seven (hells). Due to your collection of religious merit as you had contact with the observers of the Kārtika-vow, you were taken out of them.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

27-29. Thus showing him the hells, the official looking after the dead, took Dhaneśvara to the Yakṣa-world; then he lived there. He is the follower of Kubera, and is known as Dhanayakṣa, and after him Viśvāmitra has fashioned a holy place at Ayodhyā. This Kārtika-vow is having such an efficacy, gives pleasures and salvation. By seeing an observer of this vow even he who has committed many sins, gets salvation.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTEEN

Aśvattha and Vaṭa Praised as Gods in Disguise

Sūta said

1-4. Speaking like this to Satyabhāmā, very dear to him, Vāsudeva went to his mother's house to offer evening prayer, etc. This Kārtika is said to be powerful like this, destroying sins, always making one dear to Viṣṇu and always giving pleasures and salvation. Keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, bathing in the morning, using Tulasī (leaves etc.), concluding the vow, and offering light—these are the vows (to be observed) in Kārtika. The Kārtika-vow is complete with these five vows. The fruit that one gets is said to be pleasures and salvation.

The sages said:

5-7. O Raumaharṣaṇa, this religious act of Kārtika is said

1. Mahāpāpa—a great, or heinous sin. Murder of a brāhmaṇa, drinking liquor, stealing, violating the preceptor's bed (i.e. his wife), and company of those who commit these sins are great sins.

to be dear to Viṣṇu, giving great fruit, properly purifying and destroying sins. When it comes, it should be necessarily observed duly by men desiring salvation, or desiring enjoyments. If this is so, how should a man observing a vow, who is in a difficulty, who is in an impervious forest, or is suffering from diseases, observe the auspicious Kārtika vow?

Sūta said:

8-20. O best sages, listen. I shall tell all about it as to how it should be observed, since it is extremely fruitful. In a temple of Viṣṇu or Śiva, or in any other temple in the absence of a temple of Viṣṇu or Śiva, a man should keep awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu. If a man is in an impervious forest to which he might have gone by day, he should observe it under the root of an Aśvattha tree or even in Tulasī-groves. A man, by singing (songs) mainly containing Viṣṇu's names, near Viṣṇu, obtains the fruit of presenting a thousand cows. A man playing upon a musical instrument will obtain the fruit of a Vājapeya (sacrifice), and a dancer that of bathing at all holy places. A man who gives wealth will obtain all this religious merit of them. He would get one-sixth portion by praising and seeing (the deity). O (sages), if one who is in a calamity, does not get a watery (place) for bathing, or one is diseased, he should purify himself with (the recital of) the names of Viṣṇu. He who after observing the vow is unable to conclude it (duly), should, according to his capacity, feed brāhmaṇas for the (proper) completion of the vow. Since it gives great fruit, it should never be abandoned by men. Brāhmaṇas are the form of Viṣṇu whose form is not manifest on the earth. By their being pleased he is well pleased on the earth. If he is not able to present a lamp, he should light others' lamps. Or he should carefully protect them from wind etc. In the absence of Tulasī he should worship a brāhmaṇa, Viṣṇu's devotee, since Viṣṇu is always present in his devotees. In the absence of all (this) the observer of the vow should serve brāhmaṇas, cows and worship Aśvattha and Vaṭa trees for the completion of the vow.

The sages said:

21. How do you equate Aśvattha and Vaṭa trees with a cow

and a brāhmaṇa? How do you take them to be more venerable than all (other) trees?

Sūta said:

22-23. There is no doubt that lord Viṣṇu is of the form of Aśvattha, Vaṭa is Rudra's form, and Palāśa has taken up Brahmā's form. Seeing, worshipping and serving them is said to remove sins. These certainly destroy grief, diseases and the wicked.

The sages said:

24. O you omniscient one, tell (us) how Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva became trees. We have a great doubt about it.

Sūta said:

25-26. Formerly, it is said, gods sent Agni in a brāhmaṇa's form to create an obstacle when Śiva and Pārvatī were cohabiting. Then that Pārvatī, trembling and angry due to being deprived of the sexual pleasure, angrily cursed the gods.

Pārvatī said:

27-29. Even these worms and insects know the sexual pleasure. O gods, you will obtain the condition of plants due to having obstructed it.

Thus that Pārvatī of an angry mind, cursed the gods. Therefore, all hosts of gods have become trees. Therefore, O chief sages, both these Viṣṇu and Śiva have become Aśvattha and Vaṭa (trees). Aśvattha has become fit to be touched on a Saturday and not fit to be touched (on other days) due to contact of Śani with Viṣṇu.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTEEN

Alakṣmī's Episode

The sages said:

1. O Sūta, how has this Aśvattha tree become untouchable, and similarly how has it become fit to be touched on a Saturday? Please tell us all this in detail.

Sūta said:

2-3. Out of the gems that the lordly gods obtained after churning the ocean, the gods gave Lakṣmī and Kaustubha to Viṣṇu. When he accepted Lakṣmī as his wife, she respectfully said to him having the disc in his hand.

Lakṣmī said:

4-5. How will you marry me, the younger one, without getting this elder one married? Therefore, O Viṣṇu, having first married this Alakṣmī, my elder sister, take me. This is an old practice.

Sūta said:

6-10a. Hearing these words of her, Viṣṇu, the creator of the world, gave according to his own words, to sage Uddālaka who had practised penance for a very long time, that Alakṣmī, of a big face, white teeth, having a bright body, tall, having red eyes, and having rough and tawny hair. That sage, in accordance with Viṣṇu's words, accepted her and he, knowing Dharma, brought her to his hermitage full of sounds of (the recital of) the Vedas, rich with the fragrance of sacrificial fire, and resounding with the sounds of (the recitals of) lores. Seeing that hermitage, she who was afflicted, said these words:

Jyeṣṭhā said:

10b. This abode full of Vedic sounds is not proper for me. O brāhmaṇa, I shall not come here. Take me somewhere else. Do not delay.

Uddālaka said:

11. Why do you not come? What is here that you don't

like? Tell me at which place an abode proper for you would be (found).

Jyeṣṭhā said:

12-15. I shall not stay there where the sound of (the recital of) the Vedas is heard, guests are honoured, and sacrifices etc. are (performed). So also I shall not stay there where a pair of lovers live, and where the dead ancestors are honoured. I love a place where there are men engaged in gambling and taking away others' wealth, and where there live adulterers. I am interested in that place where cow slaughter takes place, drinking is indulged in, so also where sins like the killing of a brāhmaṇa take place.

Sūta said:

16-17. Hearing these words of her, sage Uddālaka's face was dejected; and recollecting Viṣṇu's words, he did not say (anything). He went here and there. Seeing his worship she said, "I will not come". Then through confusion, he too became very much afflicted. Then Uddālaka spoke these words to that Alakṣmī:

Uddālaka said:

18. O Alakṣmī, stay for a moment at the root of this Aśvattha tree till I return after finding a place for (our) stay.

Sūta said:

19-21. Thus keeping her there, Uddālaka went (away). When she who was waiting for him for a long time did not see him, she, afflicted due to being forsaken by her husband, wept piteously. Lakṣmī, in her abode in Vaikuṇṭha heard her weeping there. Then with her mind dejected, she respectfully said to Viṣṇu:

Lakṣmī said:

22. O lord, O kind one, my elder sister is afflicted due to being forsaken by her husband. If I am dear to you, then go to console her.

Sūta said:

23. Then Viṣṇu, full of compassion, came there with Lakṣmī, consoled that Alakṣmī, and said these words to her:

Śrī Viṣṇu said:

24-25. O Alakṣmī, being in possession of this Aśvattha tree, be stable. I have made from my portion this abode for you. May this younger sister of you be stable with those householders who everyday worship you, the elder one.

Sūta said:

26-28. Those who listen to and recite this (account of) the greatness of Kārtika, would live in Viṣṇu's city till the final deluge. There is on the earth no other (vow) than that of Kārtika, dear to Viṣṇu, which removes diseases, which destroys sins, which is a great giver of intelligence, which is a means of getting sons, wealth etc., which is the cause of salvation. What is the use (the need) for going to and resorting to holy places for the man who, with restraints, observes the Kārtika vow which is dear to Viṣṇu, which destroys all sins, which brings about prosperity in the form of good sons and grandsons, wealth and grains?

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEEN

The Importance of Bathing in Kārtika

Sūta said:

1. Hearing all these words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, that noble Satyā, daughter of Satrājit, then said:

Satyā said:

2. O lord, I have not heard the greatness of Kārtika in detail. How is Kārtika (said to be) the best of all months?

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

3. You have well asked with respect about the vow of Kārtika. It was formerly told to Śaunaka by very noble Sūta.

Sūta said:

4. Listen, I shall give the auspicious answer to this question. Formerly the lord told it to Kārtikeya who had asked about it.

Kārtikeya said:

5-15. O lord, I, a devotee of Viṣṇu, have heard many secrets of Viṣṇu told by you. Men have come to the ocean of mundane existence, covered with large waves of unhappiness. Carefully tell (some story) for their emancipation. So also, O you best among speakers, tell about the rite of Kārtika and the bath (in it), by which men will cross over the ocean of unhappiness, O father. Tell me about the greatness of illumination, of offering mango-sprouts, O you of a good vow, and the greatness of gopīcandana and Tulasī, O lord. Tell me also about the greatness of jasmine flowers; so also of lotuses; so also tell about the greatness of dhātrī-fruits and damanaka. O lord, tell about the greatness of ketakī-flowers; so also of the offering of eatables, the greatness of a holy place, and the fruit of the bath in Māgha. O best god, tell about the fruit of eating from palāśa-leaves, the fruit of waving the light by setting right the wick of another's lamp, O Śiva. (Tell me about) the greatness of the holy place (called) Puṣkara, so also of Śūkara, O lord; so also the greatnecs of Śālagrāma, and the arrangement of the Svastika (symbol). Tell me also about the fruit of gifts, avoiding others' food, the fruit of the fast for a month, and of giving away a couch. O you of a good vow, (tell me) about the greatness of Dīpāvalī, and of the Prabodhinī (Ekādaśī); so also tell me in detail the importance of the five days from the eleventh to the fifteenth of the bright half of the month of Kārtika.

The lord said:

16-21. O child, you have asked well for emancipating the people. I shall undoubtedly tell it. There is no other Viṣṇu devotee

like you. O child, there is no doubt that I am emancipated by a good son (like) you. You always have a firm devotion to Viṣṇu. The best brāhmaṇa who gives (i.e. tells) the Vaiṣṇava practice to people gets the religious merit obtained by giving the earth with the ocean. That is not equal even to a croreth part of (the merit got from the vow of) Kārtika. On one side are all gifts, gifts of cows, all sacrifices with presents, the residence at Puṣkara, Kurukṣetra, Himālaya, the residence at the holy place of Mathurā, at Vārāṇasī, at Śūkara, and on the other side is Kārtika always dear to Viṣṇu, O child.

Sūta said:

22. Speaking like this, O best sage, Śiva again spoke these words: "I shall tell you in great detail the importance of bathing (daily) in (the month of) Kārtika".

The lord said:

23-32. The Kṛta age is said to be of brāhmaṇas, the Tretā age is said to be that of kṣatriyas, Dvāpara is said to be of vaiśyas and Kali is said to be of Śūdras. O child, people show slackness in taking a bath in the Kali age. Yet I shall tell you about the bath in Kārtika and Māgha. A man whose hands, feet, speech, mind are controlled, and who has knowledge, penance and fame (to his credit) enjoys the fruit of (the visits to) a holy place. These five—one having no faith, a sinful person, an atheist, one with a split mind, and a disputant—do not enjoy the fruit of (the visit to) a holy place. That brāhmaṇa who, getting up in the morning, would always bathe in a holy place, is free from all sins, and obtains (i. e. goes to) the highest Brahman. O Kārtikeya, those who know about a bath, have said that a bath is of four kinds: Vāyavya, Vāruṇa, Divya and Brāhmya. A bath in the evening is Vāyavya; a bath in a sea etc. is Vāruṇa; a bath with hymns recited by brāhmaṇas is Brāhmya; and a divine bath is the one bright with the water (directly falling) from the clouds. Of all the baths Vāruṇa is the best. A brāhmaṇa, a kṣatriya, a vaiśya should take a bath with the (recital of) hymns. O Kārtikeya, a śūdra, so also women, should bathe silently. A girl, a young women, an old woman, a man, a woman, a eunuch are free from all sins due to

a bath (everyday) in Kārtika and Māgha. Having bathed in Kārtika, they obtain the desired fruit.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEEN

Śiva Answers Kārtikeya's Queries

Sūta said:

1. Having approached the listener, viz. Kārtikeya, full of devotion, the bull-bannered lord Śiva spoke again.

The lord said:

2-15. Kārtika is Viṣṇu's month and the best of all months. In the Kali age all the thirtythree gods come together in this month. In the very prosperous month of Kārtika men will give to a brāhmaṇa a cow, gold, silver, land, residence, cows with full devotion, O you of a good vow. Of all gifts the gift of a daughter is the best. Men will duly give their daughter to a brāhmaṇa of the Atri-family. They (will) live in Vaikuṇṭha as long as the fourteen Indras (rule). When small hair appears (on the private parts), Soma enjoys a daughter. When she attains puberty, gandharvas (enjoy her); and when the breasts appear (prominent), Fire (enjoys her). A man should marry his daughter as long as she has not attained puberty. Wise men recommend a girl's marriage when she is eight years old. She should be duly given to a brāhmaṇa who is well-versed in sacred learning, possesses moral virtue, has actually studied the Vedas, and has observed celibacy. This is said to be the rule regarding a daughter to be given (in marriage). He is honoured in Rudra's heaven for as many thousand years as the number of hair on the daughter's body. (The gift of) a thousand cows is equal to that of ten bulls. (The gift of) a vehicle is equal to that of ten bulls. (The gift of) a horse is equal to that of ten vehicles. The gift of an elephant is superior to the gift of thousands of horses. The gift of gold is equal to the gift of thousands of elephants. Giving knowledge is equal to the gift

of thousands of bhāras of gold. The gift of (a piece of) land is a crorefold superior to giving knowledge. The gift of cows is superior to thousands of gifts of land. Giving food is superior to thousands of gifts of cows. All this immobile and mobile world has food as its support. Therefore, O Kārtikeya, one should with an effort (i.e. should make an effort to) give (gifts) in Kārtika. (These) three are equal gifts, and have equal fruits—a cow fulfilling all desires, earth (i.e. land) and Sarasvatī (i.e. knowledge).

Kārtikeya said:

16. O great god, please tell me other (religious) practices doing which one having got rid of all (one's) sins, would be a god.

Sūta said:

17. O you treasures of penance, what is the use of praising it in many ways? Thus asked Śiva again commenced speaking:

The lord said:

18-46. He who, observing restraints, avoids others' food in Kārtika, gets the fruit of the Cāndrāyaṇa (vow). The man who, noticing that Kārtika has arrived, would avoid others' food day by day, obtains the fruit of the Kṛcchra vow. A man should avoid oil in Kārtika; a man should avoid honey in Kārtika; one should avoid (the use of) bell-metal in Kārtika; and one should especially avoid food prepared for a group. By eating flesh (but) once (in Kārtika) he obtains (i.e. goes to) a demonish stock and is cooked in feces for sixty thousand years. Freed from that the sinner is born as a village-pig eating feces. When foods (generally) indulged in are restricted in Kārtika (by a man), he surely obtains Viṣṇu's form and a position giving salvation. There is no (other) month like Kārtika and no deity superior to Viṣṇu. There is no (other) sacred knowledge like the Vedas; there is no (other) holy place like Gaṅgā; there is no (other) practice like (that of) truth; there is no (other) age like the Kṛta (age). There is no (other) satisfaction like that of the tongue; there is no (other) pleasure like that due to giving gifts. There is no (other) friend like righteousness; there is no (other) luminary

like the eyes. He who would spend (Kārtika), the month dear to Viṣṇu, without (observing) a vow, should be known to have fallen from duty and he is born in low stocks. Kārtika is the best month, always dear to Viṣṇu's devotees. A holy river flowing into the sea is difficult to be had for a bath by those given to bathing (everyday). An unmarried girl belonging to a noble family and of good character is difficult to be found. A couple of human beings (of an amiable nature) is difficult to be found. In the world a (good) mother and especially a (good) father are difficult to be found. Honour to the good is rare. A virtuous son is rare. Residence at Dvārakā is difficult to be accomplished. Kṛṣṇa's sight is difficult to be had. A bath in Gomatī is had with difficulty. The Kārtika vow is difficult to be had. O child, the fruit that a man gets by giving (pieces of) land to brāhmaṇas at (the time of) lunar and solar eclipses is had by one who sleeps on the (bare) ground. He should feed a brāhmaṇa couple and should honour them with unguents. Blankets, gems, various garments, mattresses filled with cotton should be given along with bed-sheets. Give a pair of sandals or an umbrella in the purifying (month of) Kārtika. He who everyday eats from leaves in Kārtika, does not meet with a calamity as long as the fourteen Indras are ruling. He gets the fruit of all his desires, and would get the fruit of (visiting) all holy places. By eating from palāśa leaves a man does not see (i.e. have) a residence in hell, since this palāśa is actually known to be Brahmā granting all desired objects. O Kārtikeya, in Kārtika (a man) should avoid the middle (palāśa) leaf. In the three leaves (of palāśa), Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva (reside). He should avoid the divine leaf, (since) Brahmā is excellent Viṣṇu (*obscure*). By eating from the remaining leaves he obtains all religious merit. O best sage, by eating from the middle leaf (of palāśa) and by drinking the milk of a tawny cow a man would go to hell. A śūdra who ignorantly drinks the milk of a tawny cow, is purified by giving a cow to a brāhmaṇa in Kārtika. Giving sesamum, bathing in a river, always seeing the good, eating from palāśa leaves in Kārtika give salvation. He who observes silence, eats from palāśa leaves, bathes with (river-) water, always forgives, sleeps on the (bare) ground in Kārtika would destroy sin earned during (many) ages, O Kārtikeya, one who keeps awake before Viṣṇu

at dawn in Kārtika, would obtain the fruit of (giving) a thousand cows. The fruit which men get by offering food in pitṛpakṣa (i.e. dark half of Bhādrapada), and by offering water in Jyeṣṭha and Āṣāḍha, is obtained by them in lighting others' lamps. By lighting another's lamp and by serving Viṣṇu's devotees in Kārtika a man gets the fruit of Rājasūya and horse sacrifices. He who does not bathe in a river, does not (tell) tale(s) of Viṣṇu, does not see Viṣṇu's devotees in Kārtika would lose the religious merit (collected during) ten years. O best sage, (the religious merit of) that wise man who would remember Puṣkara through (physical) act, mentally, or through speech, would be a lakh of crore times more.

47-60. Prayāga in the month of Māgha, Puṣkara in Kārtika, so also Avantī in Vaiśākha-month would destroy sin earned during ages. O Kārtikeya, those men are blessed especially in the Kali age, who by all means serve Viṣṇu everyday. (For him,) O sage, what is the use of having offered many piṇḍas by means of (offering) srāddhas etc.? There is no doubt that he has emancipated his dead ancestors from hell. Those who for (i.e. in honour of) their dead ancestors give a bath with milk etc. to Viṣṇu, go to heaven and live there with gods for a crore of kalpas. O best brāhmaṇa, Lakṣmī does not stay for crores of existences in the houses of them who have not worshipped the lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa (i.e. Viṣṇu) in Kārtika. Those who have not worshipped Viṣṇu with black or white lotuses are stung, snatched, have perished and have fallen into the cave of Kali. He who (even) with one lotus worships the chief of gods, the lord of Lakṣmī, destroys sins (collected during) a myriad thousands of years. The lord of gods, saluted and worshipped with (just) one lotus would forgive seven hundred thousands of sins. O best sage, he who would worship Viṣṇu in Kārtika with a lakh of Tulasī-leaves would obtain a pearl on (i.e. for) every leaf as the fruit. Viṣṇu, O (my) son, is pleased for crores of thousands of kalpas with whatever is done (i.e. offered) after being mixed with (i.e. having) the fragrance of Tulasī. O Kārtikeya, Kali does not touch him who carries in his mouth, on his head or body a Tulasī (leaf) taken down from (the image of) Viṣṇu (after it was offered to him). O Kārtikeya, he who would sprinkle his body with the offerings like flowers after taking them down from (the image

of) Kṛṣṇa, becomes free from all diseases and sins also. O (my) son, undoubtedly the sins of him perish, and diseases of him come to an end, whose body touches (i.e. is smeared) with the remaining of the (burnt) charcoal etc. (offered) to Viṣṇu. The water in a conch, devotion to Viṣṇu, the remains of offerings like flowers, water (flowing from) the feet (of the image of Viṣṇu), sandal, the remains of incense remove (the sin of) the murder of a brāhmaṇa.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED NINETEEN

In Praise of a Fast for a Month

The lord said:

1-3. O best of Viṣṇu's devotees, listen to the importance of the (daily) bath in Māgha. O you very intelligent one, there is no (other) devotee of Viṣṇu like you in this world. A man gets that fruit by a (daily) bath in Māgha, which he gets on seeing Viṣṇu at Cakratīrtha or Mathurā. He who, with his senses conquered, with his mind tranquil, and endowed with moral conduct, bathes (everyday) in Māgha, does not again come to this mundane existence.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

4. To you I shall tell about the greatness of (the holy place called) Śūkara, by merely knowing which (a man would) always have my proximity.

Sūta said:

5. Saying so, lord Kṛṣṇa spoke to Satyā in many ways. I shall tell it (to you). O you (sages) having penance as your treasure; listen to it.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

6-13. A being, even a donkey, that lives in Viṣṇu's temple at Śūkara extended over five yojanas, becomes the Four-armed

(Viṣṇu). The measure of Śūkara is laid down to be three thousand cubits, three hundred cubits and three. O goddess, a man gets that fruit in half a watch (i.e. three hours), (which he would get when) he practises penance for sixty thousand years at another place. The (same) fruit is said (to be obtained) by tulāpuruṣa dāna[1] in Kurukṣetra when the Sun is seized by Rāhu. It is said to be tenfold in Kāśī, and would be hundredfold in Veṇī, and said to be thousandfold at the confluence of Gaṅgā and the ocean. It is said to be endless in Viṣṇu's temple at Śūkara. A man gives duly a lakh (of gifts) at another place. (The fruit) would be similar by giving one only at Śūkara. By bathing but once at Śūkara, in Veṇī, and at the confluence of Gaṅgā and the ocean, a man removes (the sin of) the murder of a brāhmaṇa. Alarka formerly got (the kingdom of) the earth with the seven islands after hearing the greatness of Śūkara, O Kārtikeya. (O son, go there on the Dvādaśī of the bright half of Mārgaśīrṣa.)

Kārtikeya said:

14-16. O lord, I desire to listen to (the description of) the best of vows; so also the proper manner and the fruit of a fast for a month. (So also I desire to hear) how it should be observed by men, what would be (the way of) observing the vow, (how) it is duly commenced and duly completed. O Maheśvara, tell me in detail how many times this vow, giving happiness and wealth, is to be observed, O sinless one.

Śrī Rudra said:

17-29. O Kārtikeya, since you have asked all this with devotion, listen to me explaining it, O best among the intelligent. As Viṣṇu is the greatest of the gods, as the Sun is the greatest of the luminaries, as Meru is (the greatest) of the mountains, as Garuḍa is the greatest among the birds, as Gaṅgā is (the greatest) of the holy places, as vaiśya is (the greatest) of the subjects, similarly observing the fast for a month is the greatest among the vows. He who observes the fast for a month

1. Tulāpuruṣa—Gift to a brāhmaṇa of as much gold or silver as equals the weight of one's body.

would obtain the religious merit due to all vows, all holy places and gifts. A man does not get that religious merit by means of various sacrifices like Agniṣṭoma in which many presents are given as he gets by observing the fast for a month. That man who observes the fast for a month according to the rule has (indeed) muttered (hymns), has offered oblations (into fire), has given (gifts), has observed penance, has made oblations to his dead ancestors. Dedicating a sacrifice to me, Viṣṇu, and worshipping me, and then receiving an order from his preceptor he should observe the fast for a month. Having observed all vows (in honour) of Viṣṇu and observed the auspicious (vow) of Dvādaśī etc. he should observe the fast for a month. O brāhmaṇa, after having observed the vows like Atikṛcchra, Pārāka,[1] and Cāndrāyaṇa he should fast for a month by the order of his preceptor. Having observed a fast on the Ekādaśī of the bright half of Āśvina, he should take up this vow for thirty days. A man who worships Viṣṇu and fasts for the entire month of Kārtika would enjoy the fruit in the form of salvation. In the temple of Viṣṇu he should three times a day devoutly worship Viṣṇu with the fragrant flowers of mālatī (jasmine), blue lotuses, arka flowers, lotuses, (other) flowers, uśīra-roots, camphor etc. and with the offerings of eatables, cakes, lights etc. after smearing (the lord's image) with excellent sandal.

30-43. A man, a woman or a widow, having great devotion and with his/her senses conquered, should worship the Garuḍa-bannered god (Viṣṇu) with mind, deeds and words and should day and night utter the names of Viṣṇu. He should devoutly and without false words utter Viṣṇu's praise. Full of compassion for all beings, of a tranquil temperament, harmless, sleeping and sitting on a seat outside he should narrate (the praise of) Viṣṇu. He should avoid recollection, sight, enjoying fragrant articles and talking of food, and should give up (taking) morsels. He should avoid smearing his body with oil, smearing his head with oil, (chewing) tāmbūla, smearing his body when he is observing the vow, and should avoid everything that is prohibited. While observing the vow he should not touch any-

1. Pārāka—Name of a vow of religious penance said to consist in fasting for twelve days and nights, keeping the mind attentive and organs subdued.

thing and should not disturb anyone doing a deed. A householder, remaining in a temple, should certainly observe the vow. A man, a good woman or a widow, having duly observed the fast for a month, should worship Viṣṇu properly. With his mind controlled and senses conquered, he should observe this vow without anything wanting or adding for thirty days and should observe the fast for a month, and then on the Dvādaśī (day) he should worship the auspicious Garuḍa-bannered (god). He should worship him with garlands of flowers, sandal, incense, and by besmearing (his image). A man should please Viṣṇu with clothes, ornaments and (by playing upon) musical instruments. With water (from) holy (places mixed) with sandal he should devoutly bathe (the image of) Viṣṇu. He should (worship) the image besmeared with sandal and adorned with incense and flowers. Having fed best brāhmaṇas (and pleased them) with gifts of garments etc. he should give them dakṣiṇā (i.e. presents), and saluting them he should apologise to them. Having thus fasted for a month, and having worshipped Viṣṇu, and having fed the brāhmaṇas, he is honoured in Viṣṇu's heaven. Thus he should engage thirteen brāhmaṇas. Listen to the manner in which he should dismiss them at the end of the fast for a month. Fasting on the Ekādaśī day he should perform a sacrifice (in honour) of Viṣṇu.

44-53. Having with the permission of his preceptor worshipped the lord of gods, he should, according to his capacity, worship the preceptor. Then saluting the brāhmaṇas of a pure family and character and devoted to Viṣṇu's worship, he should feed them. Then he should honour them all. Having fed thirteen brāhmaṇas, he should salute and honour the best brāhmaṇas with tāmbūla, pairs of garments, food coverings, yogapaṭṭas, threads, sacred threads, and then he should get fashioned a bed furnished with a cover, well-covered, beautiful, excellent, with pillows and decorated. Then, having according to his capacity got fashioned his golden image, he should put it on the bed after worshipping it with garlands etc. On the bed he should put a seat, wooden sandals, an umbrella, a pair of garments and shoes, and pure flowers. Having thus made the bed, and having saluted those brāhmaṇas, he should request the brāhmaṇas for their consent and say: "I am going to Viṣṇu's

world." Then the best man would go to Viṣṇu's healthy abode. He should repeatedly say to the brāhmaṇas seated in the pavilion: "O best brāhmaṇas, may all that is without the (proper) hymns and (proper) acts, be fully accomplished due to the favour of your words." I have (thus) properly told (you) the manner of (observing) the vow of the fast for a month.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWENTY

The Greatness of Śālagrāma

Sūta said:

1. Hearing these words, Kārtikeya again asked about the worship of Śālagrāma. O you having penance as your wealth, listen to it again.

Kārtikeya said:

2. O lord, O greatest among the meditating saints, I have heard about all religious practices. O lord, tell me in detail about the worship of Śālagrāma.

The lord said:

3-23. Well, well, I shall tell you what you ask, O you very intelligent one; O dear to me, listen to it. O you noble-hearted Kārtikeya, on a Śālagrāma stone the three worlds with the mobile and immobile always stay together. He who has seen, saluted, bathed and worshipped it, would get religious merit as the fruit, a crorefold more, of sacrifices, and that of the gift of a crore of cows. O child, he who has always drunk the water (flowing) from Viṣṇu's Śālagrāma, has cut off the very tormenting stay in the embryo. O son, even he, always attached to passion and without devotion, would become Viṣṇu after worshipping a Śālagrāma stone. The round Śālagrāma stone, when remembered, glorified, meditated upon, worshipped and saluted, destroys a crore (of sins). As the herds of beasts in a forest go (away) through fear on seeing a lion, so sins in large numbers go

(away) on seeing a Śālagrāma stone. A man saluting with or without devotion a Śālagrāma stone at the time of its worship would obtain salvation. A man who everyday worships the Śālagrāma stone, has no fear of Yama, so also of death and birth. A man who, in the Kali age greatly devoted, everyday worships the Śālagrāma stone with sandal, water for washing the feet, respectful offerings, offerings of eatables, lights, incenses, unguents, songs, musical instruments and hymns, enjoys for thousands of crores of kalpas in the abode of Viṣṇu. How can those men, my devotees on the earth, have manhood (i.e. birth as a human being) who have devoutly saluted Śālagrāma? Those of my devotees, the most sinful ones, who do not salute my lord, Viṣṇu, are not my devotees, being deluded by sins. Even he, being my devotee, who eats on the Ekādaśī day, harms me, and goes to the Andhatāmisra hell. One should touch my (symbol, the) Phallus. No other purification is told for him. That day which is dear to Viṣṇu, is dear to me. That mortal who would not fast on that day, is a sinner and worse than a cāṇḍāla. O son, I always live in the Śālagrāma stone. The god, being pleased, has given me that place. That fruit which is obtained by worshipping me with thousands of lotuses is obtained, a crore times more, by worshipping a Śālagrāma stone. Those men who have not worshipped a Śālagrāma stone in the mortal world, have not worshipped and saluted me. O Kārtikeya, he who worships me before a Śālagrāma stone, has worshipped me for twentyone yugas. What is the use of worshipping hundreds of Liṅgas (i.e. my symbols) without devotion to Viṣṇu? If the round Śālagrāma stone is not worshipped, then, O son, offerings of eatables, leaves, flowers, fruits, water, offered to me, is not fit.

24-51a. Everything in front of a Śālagrāma stone is purified. A man eating the eatables offered to another deity would observe the Cāndrāyaṇa(-vow, i.e. would get its fruit). (But) by eating the eatables offered to Viṣṇu, he would obtain the fruit of a crore of sacrifices. There is no doubt that by means of the water flowing from the feet of god (Viṣṇu), so also by means of the water in a conch, (men) having committed a crore of murders are purified. He who being a devotee of Śiva, would not honour a devotee of Viṣṇu, so also his hater, goes to (and lives

in) hell as long as the fourteen Indras (rule). He in whose house a householder rests for a while, drinks nectar for eight ages of Brahmā. Mean men, avoiding Kṛṣṇa's worship, perish in the painful forest of the mundane existence for thousands of crores of years. By means of worshipping the Liṅgas coming up from Śālagrāma stones, through love, men devoid of Sāṁkhya or Yoga, obtain salvation. That fruit which would be got by seeing crores of my Liṅgas, worshipping or eulogising them, would be (obtained) (just) on (worshipping) the Śālagrāma stone. There are twelve stones coming up (i.e. formed) from the Śālagrāma. Listen to the religious merit of him who worships them daily. The religious merit (obtained by) worshipping thousands of crores of Liṅgas on the bank of Jāhnavī, by living for eight yugas at Kāśī, would be had in one day (by worshipping the Śālagrāma). Then (what would be the religious merit) of a man who would worship it for many (days)? I or deities like Brahmā do not endeavour to measure it. Therefore, O son, my devotees should do devoutly, to please me, the worship of a Śālagrāma stone. At that place where Viṣṇu in the form of a Śālagrāma stone lives, live gods, demons, yakṣas, and the fourteen worlds. That fruit which a man would get by means of all the crores of recitals (of the names) of deities, would be got by the good deed, viz. recital (of the names) of Viṣṇu, in the Kali age. His dead ancestors once gratified with a piṇḍa in front of the Śālagrāma stone live (in Vaikuṇṭha). They cannot be counted. For those men who devoutly drink the water dropping from the Śālagrāma stone, what is the use of drinking thousands of the pañcagavyas (i.e. the five products obtained from a cow)? When an expiation has succeeded after having drunk the water (flowing) from Viṣṇu's feet, what is the use of (giving) gifts, observing fasts, and properly practising Cāndrāyaṇa vows? What is the use of worshipping crores of other deities for him who fashions an image of Viṣṇu lying in water in a tank? They say 'Gods have Viṣṇu as their chief'. O son, for the fruit of every religious act, there is a limit. (But) there is absolutely no measure of the fruit of the worship of the Śālagrāma stone. He who gives a stone of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu originating from Śālagrāma to a brāhmaṇa, a devotee of Viṣṇu, has performed hundreds of sacrifices. Even though he stays at

home, he has everyday bathed in Gaṅgā. He has bathed at all holy places, and is initiated for all sacrifices. One should do sprinkling with water flowing from a Śālagrāma stone. O Kārtikeya, there are stones in heaven, in the mortal world, and in the nether world. But there is no (other) stone like the Śālagrāma stone. The life of him in the world of human beings, difficult to obtain, who everyday gives a prastha of sesamum is fruitful. He gets that fruit by worshipping a Śālagrāma stone. A leaf, a flower, a fruit, water, a root or so also a blade of dūrvā offered to the Śālagrāma become equal to Meru. A man may be without a rite or having no (religious) act or hymns; but if he has a mark of the disc on his arm, he gets the proper fruit as is told in the sacred texts. All that I have seen in Viṣṇu as destroying affliction, I shall tell you, O son. "O Viṣṇu, where do you stay? What is your prop? What is your resort? O god, how are (can) you (be) pleased? Tell me all that."

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

51b-73. O Śiva, I always stay in the stone produced in Śālagrāma. Listen to my names which are there on the chariot-wheel mark. If on the wheel resembling an opening, there is no hole, then that should be known as Viṣṇu, pure and very handsome. That which has a long size, a cavity and many holes, is Pradyumna, having the Sun's face and of bright lustre. Aniruddha has a yellow lustre, is round and very beautiful, is marked with three lines at the opening, and has a mark of a lotus. God Nārāyaṇa is dark, has a raised wheel of the navel, has long lines, and has a cavity on the right side. One should know that a stone having an opening above, and beautiful, is of the form of Viṣṇu, giving desired objects, salvation, and especially wealth. The highest lord has a white lustre and is endowed with a lotus and a disc. On its surface are a round figure and very many holes. Similarly Viṣṇu is of a dark complexion on the basic, very beautiful disc (like figure). Similarly on the opening, in the middle part, a line is noticed. Kapila, Narasiṁha has a large disc and is very beautiful. He should be worshipped with celibacy; otherwise he creates difficulties. Varāha has strength as his symbol, the two discs are said to be uneven. He resembles a sapphire, has three lines, and is beautiful from (i.e. due to) the

navel. That stone which is long, has a golden complexion, and adorned with three lines, is known as 'Matsya', and gives the fruit like enjoyments and salvation. Similarly Kūrma is raised, round on the surface, and is filled with a disc (like figure). Marked with Kaustubha, it has a green colour. Hayagrīva has the shape of a horse, and is adorned with five lines, is full of many marks, and on the surface has a blue sign. Vaikuṇṭha has an undivided body, and has mark of a disc and a banner. Similarly on the hole there is a very beautiful line, of the shape of a guñja-fruit. Similarly god Śrīdhara is marked with a garland of wood-flowers; has the form of a kadamba flower, and is adorned with a group of five lines. The round and small one is called Vāmana. It is like the atasī flower, and is adorned with a mark. Similarly the handsome god is dark-complexioned and very lustrous. On its left side there are a mace and a disc, and on the right side of it there is a line. Similarly Dāmodara is big; in its centre is a disc. It resembles dūrvā, is crowded with openings, and has yellow lines. Ananta has many colours, and is marked with various circuits. It is of various forms, and grants all desired objects. He whose face is seen in all quarters and intermediate quarters and above, should be known as Puruṣottama who grants the fruit in the form of pleasures and salvation. That whose Liṅga is seen on the top of a stone coming up from Śālagrāma, is god Yogeśvara (i.e. the lord of abstract meditation), and removes (the sin of) a brāhmaṇa's murder. Padmanābha is reddish. A lotus is in contact with his face. Due to worshipping him daily a poor man would become rich.

74-83. One should point out one that is marked with a disc, having a golden body, and a collection of rays, full of many golden lines, and adorned with crystal-lustre. A very glossy (stone) gives success; a black one gives fame; a white one burns sins, and gives a father long life and sons. A dark blue one gives wealth; a red one diseases; a rough one gives dejection; and a crooked one causes poverty. One (disc on a stone) should be known to be the Sudarśana; the second (i.e. having two discs) the couple Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa. One should know the third one (i.e. having three discs) to be Acyuta; the fourth one (i.e. having four discs) to be Janārdana; the fifth one (having five discs) to be Vāsudeva; and the sixth one (having

six discs) to be Pradyumna; the seventh (having seven discs) to be Saṁkarṣaṇa; the eighth one (having eight discs) to be Puruṣottama; the ninth one (having nine discs) to be the nine modes; the tenth one (having ten discs) of his own nature; the eleventh (having eleven discs) to be Aniruddha; and the twelfth one (having twelve discs) is of the twelve forms. Discs more than these are seen on the stone called Ananta. A broken, cut or broken Śālagrāma does not have a flaw. He should carefully worship that image which is liked by him. He who carries the lord of stones after placing him on his shoulder, would subjugate the three worlds with the mobile and the immobile. Viṣṇu resides there where there is the Śālagrāma stone. The gift (given) there or the muttering of hymn or bathing done there is hundred times superior to that at Vārāṇasī, Kurukṣetra, Prayāga, Naimiṣa and Puṣkara.

84-92. The religious merit there is a crore times more. It gives great fruit at Vārāṇasī. All (such) sins like the murder of a brāhmaṇa that a man commits, are quickly burnt by the worship of Śālagrāma stone. Where there is the deity coming from Śālagrāma stone, and where there is the (deity) from Dvārāvatī, and where there is the union of the two, there is salvation. There is no doubt about this. Celibates, householders, recluses and mendicants should eat the eatables offered to Viṣṇu. No doubt should be raised about it. For its worship no hymns, no muttering, no faith are (necessary). For the worship of a Śālagrāma stone, no eulogy, no formality is needed. The auspicious circle drawn before a Śālagrāma stone, especially (the one drawn) in Kārtika purifies the family up to the seventh (descendant). He who would draw an auspicious circle even of a size of an atom before (the image of) Viṣṇu, with clay or metal-products, and he who observes the worship of the sacred fire for a full year, (the latter) being equivalent to drawing an auspicious circle in Kārtika, come to me. The sin due to cohabiting with a woman not fit to be approached, due to eating what is prohibited, perishes by means of decorating Viṣṇu's temple. That woman who draws an auspicious circle before (the image of) Viṣṇu everyday, never obtains widowhood for seven existences.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWENTYONE

The Importance of Offering Lights etc.

The Lord said:

1-25a. O Kārtikeya, of him who, resorting to the shade of dhātrī, offers piṇḍas, the dead ancestors obtain salvation through Viṣṇu's grace. O child, a man who, being adorned with dhātrī-fruits, holds a dhātrī fruit on his head, in his hand, mouth, on his body, and who eats dhātrī-fruits becomes Viṣṇu. O Kārtikeya, he, the devotee of Viṣṇu, who has a dhātrī-fruit, becomes dear to gods; then what to say of human beings? A man should not abandon a Tulasī-garland and especially a dhātrī-garland. As long as the dhātrī-garland remains round the neck of a man, Viṣṇu, till that time, remains in his body. The life of him in whose house these three, viz. dhātrī-fruit, Tulasī, and clay from Dvārakā are (found), is fruitful. A man would live in Vaikuṇṭha for as many thousands of yugas as the days he wears a dhātrī-garland in the Kali age. He who would wear a pair of garlands of dhātrī and Tulasī round his neck would live in heaven for a crore of kalpas. A man who, having controlled the group of his senses, devoutly worships Śālagrāma stone, has the religious merit of a horse sacrifice in (i.e. from) each flower. As is Viṣṇu among gods, so is Tulasī among flowers. He who everyday would worship the Garuḍa-bannered god with Tulasī, becomes free from birth, grief, old age and diseases, and would obtain salvation. In case of him who has worshipped Viṣṇu in Kārtika, Viṣṇu rubs off the row of letters written by Yama. Śrīcandana with camphor, agaru sandal with saffron, so also offering ketakī flowers and lights is always dear to Viṣṇu. He who has offered ketakī flower or light in Kārtika in the Kali-age would emancipate a hundred (members) of his family, O Kārtikeya. On the days of Kārtika, offering of lotuses, Tulasī, ketakī-flowers and mango-blossoms, and lights as the fifth (should be done). O child, he who has made in Kārtika a bower with ketakī-garlands for Viṣṇu, obtains residence in heaven. Viṣṇu, the Garuḍa-bannered god, worshipped with a ketakī-flower only, is much pleased for a thousand years. O Kārtikeya, by worshipping Viṣṇu with ketakī-

flowers, one goes to Viṣṇu's auspicious and happy abode. So also having worshipped the lord of gods when Vaiśākha has come with damanaka, he obtains a fruit due to that worship, O best of sages. O brāhmaṇa, by the sight of him who worships Viṣṇu with agasti-flowers, the fire of hell perishes. O brāhmaṇa sage, Viṣṇu, pleased by penance, does not do that which, O Mahāsena, he does, when he is adorned with mango-flowers. He who, abandoning all (other) flowers, devoutly worships Viṣṇu in Kārtika with mango flowers, would obtain the fruit of a horse-sacrifice. About him who offers Viṣṇu a garland made of mango-flowers, even the lord of gods speaks good words. O Kārtikeya, the fruit which is obtained by the gift of a myriad cows, is obtained by offering (just) one mango-flower in Kārtika. As Viṣṇu is pleased with the Kaustubha gem, or with the garland of wood-flowers, so is he pleased with a Tulasī-leaf in Kārtika.

Sūta said:

25b. Seeing Kārtikeya bowing with politeness and full of devotion, Śiva, the Bull-bannered god spoke again.

The lord said:

26-37. O Kārtikeya, listen to the importance of lights in Kārtika. The dead ancestors, always surrounded by hosts of (other) dead ancestors, desire: 'A good son, devoted to his dead ancestors, will be born in our family, who will please Viṣṇu by offering lights in Kārtika'. O Kārtikeya, to him, whose lamp burns with ghee or oil, what is the use of a horse-sacrifice? He who has offered lights in Kārtika before Viṣṇu, for five days especially in the dark half, has performed all sacrifices, and has plunged into the water at a holy place. He who offers a light on these days, would eternally obtain religious merit. A female rat, having brightened the lamp offered by others, obtained the existence of human beings difficult to obtain, and got the best position. A hunter also who, going without food, worshipped the great lord on the fourteenth day, got the highest (place) and went to Viṣṇu's world. A prostitute Lilāvatī who, due to her resorting to a cāṇḍāla, caused (to burn more) a lamp lighted by others, became pure and went to the eternal heaven. A certain

cowherd who, seeing on the new-moon day the worship of Viṣṇu again and again said, "Victory (to Viṣṇu)," became the great lord of kings. Therefore, at night, after sunset, lamps should be offered in houses, all cow-pens and all abodes, temples of gods and cremation grounds and lakes. Due to its religious merit the offering of lights with ghee for a good purpose should be done for five days. The dead ancestors who were sinful and who had missed the rites (of the offering) of piṇḍas and water, get the highest salvation due to the religious merit of offering lights.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWENTYTWO

The Celebration of Dīpāvalī

Kārtikeya said:

1-2. O lord, now tell me in particular the fruit of Dīpāvalī. Why is it celebrated? What would be its deity? O lord, tell me what should be and should not be given during the festival. What (kind of) exultation is indicated during it? What sport is mentioned?

Sūta said:

3. Hearing these words of Kārtikeya, the lord who had burnt up Cupid, said, 'Well' and laughed and said these words, O Brāhmaṇas.

Śrī Śiva said:

4-20. O Kārtikeya, on the thirteenth day of the dark half of Kārtika, a man should offer a light to Yama outside (his house). Thereby untimely death is avoided. "May the Sun's son, with Death having a noose in his hand and with his wife, be pleased due to this offering of the light" Those who are scared of sins, should necessarily bathe at moon-rise on the fourteenth day of the dark half of Kārtika. He, being careful, should bathe early in the morning on the fourteenth day pierced

(i.e. mixed) with the previous day of the dark half of Kārtika. Lakṣmī (resides) in oil and Gaṅgā in water. He who would bathe in the morning on Caturdaśī in Dīpāvalī does not see Yama's world. To destroy (i.e. to avoid) hell, he should whirl (round himself) apāmārga, tumbī, prapunnāṭa, vāhvala (twigs) while bathing. "O Apāmārga, being with a clod of furrowed land and with thorn and leaf, remove my sin, when repeatedly whirled." He should whirl over his head apāmārga and prapunnāṭa. Then with (i.e. by reciting) Yama's names, he should offer libations of water. "Salutation to Yama, Dharmarāja, Mṛtyu, Antaka, Vaivasvata, Kāla and Sarvabhūtakṣaya (Destroyer of all beings), Audumbara, Dadhna, Nīla, Parameṣṭhin, Vṛkodara, Citra, Citragupta." Having worshipped the deities, he (i.e. the king) should offer a light to Naraka. Then at the break of night he should offer pleasing lights at the temples of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva etc., and especially at apartments on the tops of the houses, sanctuaries, assembly halls, rivers, ramparts, gardens, wells, streets, pleasure-groves near houses, stables and abodes of elephants also. O Kārtikeya, having, like this, bathed in the morning on the new-moon day, and having devoutly worshipped and saluted deities and dead ancestors, and having offered the pārvaṇa śrāddha with curd, ghee, milk etc., he should feed brāhmaṇas with various kinds of food, and apologise to them. Then, O dear one, in the afternoon the king should gratify the citizens. Having chitchatted with them, honoured them he should converse with them. O Kārtikeya, for one year love is generated among those who talk. Before Viṣṇu has got up, he should awaken Lakṣmī through the women.

21-32. When a man has awakened Lakṣmī at the time of her getting up through a good woman, for one year Lakṣmī does not leave him. The haters of gods (i.e. the demons) scared of Viṣṇu obtained fearlessness from the brāhmaṇas, after knowing (that Viṣṇu) was asleep in the Milky Ocean, and Lakṣmī had resorted to the lotus. "You are the lustre, Śrī Ravi (i.e. the Sun), the Moon, the Lightning, the Golden Star; the lustre occurring in the lustre of the lamp is the lustre of all the lustres. That Lakṣmī that lives on the earth, in the cowpen on the auspicious day of Dīpāvalī in Kārtika, may grant me a boon." Śiva and Bhavānī

took to playing with dice as a sport. Lakṣmī, propitiated by Bhavānī remained in the form of a cow. Formerly Pārvatī vanquished Śiva in the game of dice, and sent him away naked. So this Śiva is unhappy. Gaurī always remains happy. He who gets victory first (passes) the year happily. When the night passes like this, and people have their eyes half-closed, Alakṣmī is driven out of the courtyard of the house by the joyful city-women by means of sounding the musical instruments and drums. In the case of a defeat (in the game of dice) opposite will be the case. On the first day, when the sun has risen, Govardhana should be worshipped in the morning and one should play the game of dice at night. Then cows should be decorated; and they should not be used to carry (loads etc.) or should not be milked. "O Govardhana, O support of the earth, O protector of Gokula, O you who were lifted by the hand of Viṣṇu, give (us) crores of cows. That Lakṣmī who remains in the form of the cow of the regents of the quarter, and that carries ghee for the sacrifice, may remove my sin. May cows stand before me. May cows be behind me. May cows be in my heart. I live among cows." Thus worship of Govardhana (should be done).

33-42. Having pleased with sincere devotion deities and good men, he should please others by giving food and (should please) the learned men by offering (i.e. speaking gentle) words. (He should please) the inmates of the harem by (giving them) garments, tāmbūlas, lights, flowers, camphor, saffron, food and eatables of superior and inferior quality. The king should please the chief of the village with gifts and vassals with wealth, and the hosts of foot soldiers good neck-ornaments and bracelets. The king should also please his ministers and his own people separately. Then having properly gratified wrestlers and actors, so also the bulls and large oxen fighting with one another and other soldiers and foot soldiers who are well-adorned being seated on a raised seat, he should see the actors, dancers and bards, and should cause to fight and roar the cows and buffaloes etc. which (he possesses). By means of sounding words (of calls) and responses he makes the cows attract their calves. Then, O Kārtikeya, he should put up a divine arch over the path in the eastern direction in the afternoon, tied to a pillar of the

fort or a tree; (it should be made) of kuśa (grass) and should have many hanging strings of flowers. Observing many horses and elephants, he should take them and bulls with cows, so also he-buffaloes and she-buffaloes furious with bells to the base of thearch. Through the best brāhmaṇas who have offered a sacrifice, he should put up the arch. Then, he, of a good vow, should make obeisance by (reciting) this hymn:

43-57. "O mārgapāli, salutation to you who give happiness to all the world." O Kārtikeya, at the base of the mārgapāli cows and great bulls go. Kings, princes and especially brāhmaṇas on crossing the mārgapāli, become free from disease and happy. Having done all this, at night he should actually worship Bali, the lord of demons, in a circle made on the ground. Having drawn, with five colours, (the picture of) Bali, the lord of demons, complete with all ornaments, accompanied by Vindhyāvali, surrounded by the demons Kūṣmāṇḍa, Maya, Jambhāru, Madhu, and with his entire face delighted, and with a crown and bright earrings, and again (drawing the picture of) the lord of demons with two arms in a small or big chamber in his own house, he should then worship it. The lord of kings, who, being pleased and with his ministers and priests, and with his mother, brothers, and kinsmen, worships (the demon-lord) with lotuses, red lotuses, flowers, white lotuses and blue lotuses, with sandal, flowers, offerings of eatables with milk, jaggery and sweetened milk, with liquor, flesh, wine, things eaten by licking or by sucking, (other) eatables and offerings, and by (reciting) this hymn, gets happiness during that year: "O king Bali, O lord, O son of Virocana, salutation to you. O future Indra, O enemy of gods, accept this worship." Having thus offered the worship and keeping awake at night, he should make (others) keep awake at night with actors, dancers, singers, and make people place (the image of) king Bali with white rice inside the house on a couch, and should worship him with fruits and flowers. O Kārtikeya, everything there should be done with reference to Bali. The sages, the seers of truth say that all those (objects) that are inexhaustible (come to him). Whatever small or big gift is made here, all that would be inexhaustible, auspicious, and would please Viṣṇu. May all the untractable practices of those men who do not worship you, Bali, at night, come to you.

58-69. O child, Viṣṇu himself, being pleased, has granted this great festival to Bali who had obliged the demons. O Kārtikeya, since then (this festival of) Kaumudī has commenced (for) ever. It melts all troubles and destroys all difficulties. It removes the grief of people, it fulfils desires, and brings about wealth, nourishment and happiness. The word 'ku' stands for the earth, the word 'muda' stands for joy. Due to the root (meaning) of the two (words coming together) the festival is said to be (i.e. called) Kaumudī, since the people mutually rejoice (during it) on the earth. They are glad and pleased, are happy, so it is called Kaumudī. O son, since during it red lotuses are offered to Bali by kings for (removing) their sins, therefore it is called Kaumudī. To the king who every year gives the earth, (clean) like a mirror, for a day and night to the king of demons, how can there be fear from diseases? He has plenty of corn, happiness, health, excellent wealth. All people are free from diseases and free from all calamities. So, to spread devotion on the earth, the Kaumudī (festival) is celebrated. O Kārtikeya, he who lives with a (particular) feeling during it (i.e. the festival) passes the year with that feeling of joy, sorrow etc. If he weaps, the year makes him weep; if he is delighted, the year is delightful. If he enjoys (the festival) he enjoys the year; if he is happy, the year will be happy. Therefore, good men should joyfully celebrate Kaumudī. This day in Kārtika is said to be sacred to Viṣṇu and demons.

70-73. Of the families of the intelligent ones, having happiness due to (giving) gifts and enjoyments, who celebrate the light festival pleasing all, and who worship Bali, the entire year giving the lord(?), passes happily. O Skanda, these dates beginning with the second are well known. For four months and then in the rainy season they cause well-being. The first is in the month of Śrāvaṇa; the second is in the month of Bhādrapada; the third is in Āśvina; the fourth would be (i.e. fall) in Kārtika. Kaluṣā falls in the month of Śrāvaṇa, Amalā in Bhādrapada, Pretasaṁcārā in Āśvina, and Yāmyakāmyatā in Kārtika.

Kārtikeya said:

74. Why is the one (in Śrāvaṇa) called Kaluṣā? Why is the one (in Bhādrapada) said to be Nirmalā? Why is the one (in

Āśvina called Pretasaṁcārā? And why is the fourth called Yāmyā?

Sūta said:

75. Hearing these words of Kārtikeya, the Bull-bannered lord, the cause of the beings, laughed, and spoke (these) gentle words.

Maheśa said:

76-88. Formerly when Vṛtra was killed and Indra obtained the kingdom, a horse sacrifice was commenced to remove the sin of the brāhmaṇa's murder. Indra angrily killed the brāhmaṇa (Vṛtra) with his thunderbolt. The (sin of the) killing was thrown down on the earth in six ways: in a tree, in water, on the land, in a woman, in one who causes abortion, and in fire after dividing it in due order. Due to hearing about that sin, with the day previous to the second, a woman, a tree, a river, the land, fire, and one who procures an abortion are polluted. For this reason it is called Kaluṣā. Formerly the earth merged into the blood of Madhu and Kaiṭabha. Therefore (to the measure of) eight fingers she is impure. The menstrual flow of women is impure. All the rivers in the rainy season are impure. Fire (going) up is impure due to soot. Trees are impure due to exudation. Those that cause an abortion are impure due to contact. Filth moves on this day. Therefore, she is said to be Kaluṣā. There are the wicked atheists who censure the good practices of gods and sages. The second one is pure from the filth of their words. Therefore, it is Nirmalā. The Sāṁkhyas, Tārkikas (i.e. logicians) teach and study the sacred texts on days forbidden for study. On the second (i.e. Amalā) day the Śruti-followers are purified from the filth of their words and bad words. Therefore it (is called) Nirmalā. O child, the three worlds would be purified due to the birth of Kṛṣṇa in Śrāvaṇa. The wise ones have indicated it as Nirmalā. The Pretasaṁcārā is (so called) because of movements of the dead ancestors, grandsires like the Agniṣvāttas, the Barhiṣads, the Ājyapas, and the Somapas also. The dead ancestors are called departed spirits. They move on that (day). They are worshipped with Svadhā hymns by their sons, and the sons of their sons and daughters. They, moving

departed spirits, leave after being gratified by means of śrāddhas, gifts and sacrifices. The spirits are seen to move on the earth on the Mahālaya.

89-103. Therefore, O Kārtikeya, it is called Pretasaṁcārā, Since, O Kārtikeya, on this day worship is offered to Yama by men, therefore, it is called Yāmyakā. I have told the truth and the truth (only). Those best men who listen to the importance of Kārtika, certainly get the religious merit due to the (daily) bath in Kārtika. A man, having bathed on the Bhānujā on the second day of Kārtika, should worship Yama in the morning. (Thereby) he does not see Yama. O Śaunka, formerly, on the second day of the bright half of Kārtika, Yama was fed and honoured by Yamunā in her house. On the second day a great gift (is given). Denizens of hell are gratified. They, separated (i.e. freed) from sins, are free from all bondage. They all, being praised, remain pleased as they like. This great festival, giving pleasure to Yama's region, takes place for them. Therefore, this Yamadvitīyā is well known in the three worlds, and so the wise should not eat at home (on this day). They should affectionately take a nourishing meal at their sister's hand; gifts should duly be given to sisters. Then along with the gift of golden ornaments and garments and honouring (their sister) they should eat from the hand of their sister of whole blood. The meal from the sister's hand should be taken on all (these days). It is nourishing. Yama is gratified on the second day of bright half of Kārtika. Yama is mounted upon the seat (i.e. back) of a he-buffalo. The lord holds a staff and a mallet. He is surrounded by his jubilant servants. Obeisance to him of the nature of Yāmyā. For those who have pleased their sisters whose husbands are alive, with gifts of garments etc. there is no quarrel (with anyone), nor any fear from their enemy during the year. O sinless one, O my son, I have told you the entire account along with its secret. It is blessed, gives success, increases the (span of) life, and is the means of righteous acts and enjoyments. Since on this day god Yamarāja was well-fed by Yamunā with a sister's affection (for her brother), therefore he who, on this day, eats from the hand of his sister, gets wealth and excellent riches.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWENTYTHREE

Instructions Concerning the Fast

Kārtikeya said:

1-3. O lord, I wish to listen to the vow which is best among the vows; so also the mode of observing the fast for a month and the fruit of it as is told; and also how the vow is to be commenced, and how it is to be duly completed. O lord, tell me in detail the number (of days) for which this vow is to be observed, O best of the gods.

Śrī Rudra said:

4-17. Well, O kārtikeya, hear from me who am telling you, all that you have devoutly asked, O best among the intelligent. As Viṣṇu is among gods, as the Sun is among the shining ones, as Meru is among mountains, and Garuḍa among birds, as Gaṅgā is among holy places, as the trader is among the subjects, so is this fast for a month the best of all vows. He who observes the fast for a month would obtain the merit of all vows, and all holy places, and the fruit due to all gifts. A man does obtain that merit by means of sacrifices like Agniṣṭoma (performed) with profuse gifts, which he obtains by fasting for a month. A man who duly observes the fast for a month, has (indeed) muttered (hymns), has offered oblations into fire, has given (gifts), has practised penance, and performed svadhā (i.e. pleased his dead ancestors by offering them oblations). Dedicating a sacrifice to Viṣṇu, and having worshipped him, and having secured his preceptor's order, he should fast for a month. Having observed all the auspicious vows as prescribed for the devotee of Viṣṇu, such as Dvādaśī, he should then observe the fast for a month. Having observed Atikṛcchra, Pārāka and Cāndrāyaṇa (vows) he, considering his physical strength and weakness, should observe the fast for a month. An anchorite or an ascetic or a widow should observe the fast for a month with the preceptor's—brāhmaṇa's—order. Having bathed and fasted on the eleventh of Āśvina, he should take up this vow for thirty days. That man who, worshipping Viṣṇu, would fast for the entire month of Kārtika, would enjoy the fruit of salvation.

In the temple of Viṣṇu he should devoutly worship Viṣṇu three times (a day) with jasmine flowers, blue lotuses, lilies and lotuses, camphor and besmearing (the image) with saffron, sandal, and excellent sandal, (should worship him) with offerings of eatables, incense and lights.

18-29. A man, a woman or a widow, having great devotion and with his senses conquered, should worship the Garuḍa-bannered (god Viṣṇu) with mind, deeds and words, and should day and night utter the names of Viṣṇu. He should devoutly and without false words utter Viṣṇu's praise. Full of compassion for all beings, of a tranquil temperament, harmless, sleeping and sitting on a seat outside, he should narrate (the praise of) Viṣṇu. He should avoid thinking, seeing, enjoying fragrant articles, and talking of food, and should give up (taking) morsels. He should avoid smearing his body with oil, smearing his head with oil, (chewing) tāmbūla, smearing his body when he is observing the vow, and should avoid everything that is prohibited. While observing the vow he should not touch anything and should not disturb anyone doing a deed. A householder, remaining in a temple, should certainly observe the vow. A man, a good woman or a widow, having duly observed the fast for a month, should worship Viṣṇu properly. With his mind controlled and senses conquerred, he should observe this vow without anything wanting or additional for thirty days, and should observe the fast for a month, and then on the Dvādaśī (day) he should worship the auspicious Garuḍa-bannered (god). He should worship him with garlands of flowers, sandal, incense, and by besmearing (his image). A man should please Viṣṇu with clothes, ornaments, and (by playing upon) musical instruments. With water from holy places and mixed with sandal he should devoutly bath the image of Viṣṇu. He should (worship) the image besmeared with sandal, and adorneed with incense and flowers. Having fed best brāhmaṇas and pleased them with dakṣiṇā (i.e. presents), and saluting them he should apologise to them. Having apologised to the brāhmaṇas, he should dismiss them after having honoured and worshipped them.

30-42. In this way having observed the fast for a month and worshipped Viṣṇu according to his monetary capacity, with

devotion, and having fed the brāhmaṇas according to his capacity he is honoured in the heaven of Viṣṇu. Now listen to the manner in which at the end of the fast for a month, having chosen thirteen brāhmaṇas, he should dismiss them. Observing a fast on the Ekādaśī day, he should perform a sacrifice (in honour) of Viṣṇu. Having, with the consent of his preceptor, worshipped the lord of gods, and having, according to his capacity, honoured his preceptor, he should salute his preceptor. Then he should feed after saluting the brāhmaṇas of a pure character and family and greatly devoted to worshipping Viṣṇu. Then having worshipped and fed all the brāhmaṇas and having given the best brāhmaṇas tāmbūlas, pairs of garments, food and coverings, so also yogapaṭṭas (i.e. cloths thrown over the back and knees of ascetics during abstract meditation), threads and sacred threads and then having saluted them, he should devoutly honour them. He should prepare a bed furnished with a cover, well-covered, beautiful, excellent, with pillows and decorated. Then, having according to his capacity, got fashioned his (i.e. Viṣṇu's) golden image, he should put it on the bed after worshipping it with garlands etc. On the bed he should put a seat, wooden sandals, an umbrella, a pair of garments and shoes, and pure flowers. Having thus made the bed, and having saluted those brāhmaṇas, he should request the brāhmaṇas for their consent and say: "I am going to Viṣṇu's world." Then the best man would go to Viṣṇu's healthy abode. He should repeatedly say to the brāhmaṇas seated in the pavilion: "O best brāhmaṇas, may all that is without the (proper) hymns and (proper) acts, be fully accomplished due to the favour of your words." I have (thus) properly told (you) the manner of (observing) the vow of the fast for a month.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWENTYFOUR

Haribodhinī, Bhīṣmapañcaka etc.

The lord said:

1-15. O best god, also listen to the greatness of Prabodhinī which destroys sins, enhances merit, and gives salvation to those who comprehend the truth. O Kārtikeya, Gaṅgā Bhāgīrathī roars on the earth till the time the Haribodhinī (Ekādaśī) in Kārtika has not come. The holy places and the lakes up to the ocean roar till the time the Prabodhinī (Ekādaśī) in Kārtika has not arrived. Thousands of horse sacrifices and hundreds of Rājasūya sacrifices are equal to one fast on the Prabodhinī (Ekādaśī). O brāhmaṇa, Prabodhinī gives even that which is desired but which is difficult to be got or reached in the three worlds with the mobile and the immobile. O brāhmaṇa, Haribodhinī when fasted on, easily gives affluence, union, knowledge, kingdom, happiness and wealth. Just by means of one fast Haribodhinī burns the sins resembling Meru and Mandara committed (by a man). O best among men, he who naturally observes a fast on the Prabodhinī (day), according to the rule, gets the fruit as is told (in the sacred texts). The sin committed during thousands of former existences is burnt like a heap of cotton by keeping awake on the Prabodhinī (day). O Kārtikeya, listen; I shall tell you the characteristic(s) of the vigil, by merely knowing which Viṣṇu is not difficult to be secured. O noble one, a man should sing, play upon musical instruments, recite the Purāṇas, offer incense, light, eatables, flowers, besmear (the image) with sandal, offer fruits, respectful offerings, have faith, give gifts, control his senses, be truthful, without sleep, full of joy and (religious) acts, (offer worship) with energy and without laziness etc. by going round (the image), and preceded by obeisance, so also accompanied by waving of lights. With a mind free from dejection he should wave lights before Viṣṇu in every watch. He who, with a concentrated mind, keeps vigil accompanied with these characteristics, and without dishonesty regarding money, for the lord, is not reborn on the earth.

16-26. He who thus devoutly and without deceitfulness keeps awake on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, is taken to the

highest position. He who, everyday in Kārtika, worships Viṣṇu with the recital of the Puruṣa-sūkta (hymn) has worshipped Viṣṇu for thousands of crores of years. The man who would everyday worship Viṣṇu in Kārtika according to the prescribed manner for five days, would enjoy salvation. He who would worship Viṣṇu (saying) 'Salutation to Nārāyaṇa', is free from torments in hell and goes to an auspicious position. He who recites in Kārtika (the hymn containing) the thousand names of Viṣṇu, and (the account of) the release of the lord of elephants, does not have rebirth. He who keeps awake on the Dvādaśī in the month of Kārtika lives in heaven for thousands of crores of yugas and hundreds of Manu's periods. And hundreds and thousands (persons) born in his family obtain Viṣṇu's position. Therefore, one should keep awake. O beautiful lady, he who eulogises and sings (songs about Viṣṇu) in the last watch (of a day) in Kārtika, lives in Śvetadvīpa with his dead ancestors. He who offers eatables to Viṣṇu at the end of a day in Kārtika lives for so many yugas in heaven, O best sages. O best sage, he who would continuously worship the lord of gods with jasmine flowers and lotus, goes to the highest position. A man who observes (fast on) the Ekādasī of the bright half of Kārtika, and gives auspicious pitchers (to brāhmaṇas) in the morning, goes to my abode.

Kārtikeya said:

27-28. O lord, tell me about the virtuous vow, best among the vows, viz. Bhīṣmapañcaka to be observed in the month of Kārtika. Through favour to me and the sages, tell me, O grandsire, about the manner in which it is observed, and its fruit, O best god.

The lord said:

29-45. O you best among the believers in vows, I shall explain to you the very meritorious vow which lasts for five days. Since Bhīṣma got it from Viṣṇu, it is called Bhīṣmapañcaka. Who, except Viṣṇu, is able to tell the merits of this vow? Listen to the ancient practice. In the bright half of Kārtika it was observed by Vasiṣṭha, Bhṛgu, Garga etc. in the ages like Kṛta. In the yugas like Tretā it was observed by Ambarīṣa with

(offerings of) food etc. and by brāhmaṇas observing celibacy, muttering hymns and performing rites like sacrifices. So also (it was observed) by kṣatriyas and vaiśyas highly devoted to truth and purity. It is difficult to be observed by those who are void of truth (i.e. are not truthful) and cannot be observed by those of foolish hearts. They say it is difficult to be observed, (that is, it is) 'Bhīṣma'. It cannot be observed by ordinary men. O best brāhmaṇa, he who observes it, has (indeed) observed every (vow). This Bhīṣmapañcaka vow gives great merit, destroys great sins. Therefore, men should carefully observe it. Having properly and according to the precept bathed on the Ekādaśī in the bright half of Kārtika one should take up this vow lasting for five days. The observer of the vow should especially bathe in the morning and at mid-day in a river or a spring, and having obtained cowdung with rice and barley he should in due course gratify his dead ancestors. One of a strong vow, having bathed and observed silence, and having put on washed garments, should carefully offer water and make respectful offering to Bhīṣma. He should carefully worship Bhīṣma and give gifts. He should carefully and especially give five jewels to a brāhmaṇa. Lord Viṣṇu with Lakṣmī should also be always worshipped. By means of worshipping (Viṣṇu) during the group of five (days) Viṣṇu is pleased for crores of kalpas. Whatever (image etc.) is made, he should fashion it with five metals. By giving water and making a respectful offering, a man gets the entire fruit of vows (lasting) for a year. One who makes (the offering) with (the recital of) this hymn: 'I am offering this water to Bhīṣma who has Vaiyāghrapāda gotra and Sāṁkṛta pravara' would enjoy salvation. 'I make the respectful offering to Bhīṣma, the incarnation of the Vasus, the son of Śantanu, and a life-long celibate.' This is the hymn of the respectful offering.

46-56. He, who, in this way, finishes the group of five (days), undoubtedly gets religious merit equal to that of a horse sacrifice. For five days he should carefully observe restraint. O son, the practice of a vow is not possible without restraint. Viṣṇu gave (the highest position) to Bhīṣma who departed in the Uttarāyaṇa; he became[1]....Then he should get Viṣṇu, the

1. This part is unintelligible (Tr.)

destroyer of all sins. Then he should devoutly bathe (the image) with water, honey, milk and ghee; so also with the five products of a cow and water mixed with sandal. Then he should besmear (the image of) Viṣṇu, the Garuḍa-bannered (god) with fragrant sandal, with saffron, and with camphor mixed with uśīra (sandal). He should worship (the image) with charming flowers along with black aloewood and incense. He, with devotion, should burn guggulu (a fragrant gum resin) with ghee before (the image of) Kṛṣṇa. During the five days he should offer light day and night. He should offer excellent food as offering of eatables. Having thus worshipped, remembered and saluted the god, he should mutter one hundred and eight times the hymn *Namo Vāsudevāya*. He should make an offering with sesamum, rice and barley smeared with ghee, with the utterance of the hymn of six syllables, along with the utterance of the exclamation *svāhā*. The observer of the vow, having offered the evening sandhyā prayer, having saluted Viṣṇu, having muttered the hymn as before, should sleep on the (bare) ground.

57-69. All this should be done for five days. Listen to the speciality of and that which is superior in this vow. On the first day the observer of the vow should worship Viṣṇu's feet with lotuses. On the second (day) he should worship his knees with bilva-leaves. Then, with his mind directed to him, he should devoutly worship the head of the Disc-holder, the god of gods, with jasmine flowers on the full-moon day of Kārtika. Having succinctly worshipped Viṣṇu on the Ekādaśī, he, after having eaten cowdung, should duly observe fast on the Ekādaśī day. The observer of the vow should drink cow's urine on the Dvādaśī, milk on the Trayodaśī and curd on the Caturdaśī with (the recital of) the hymn. Having eaten (and drunk these) for the purification of his body and having fasted for four days, he should, after bathing, worship Viṣṇu according to the sacred precept. Giving up sinful thoughts the intelligent one, observing celibacy, should devoutly feed brāhmaṇas, and give presents to them. The man, avoiding liquor and flesh, so also sinful coitus, subsisting on vegetables and sages' foods, should be deeply engaged in worshipping Kṛṣṇa. Then having first (sipped) the five products of the cow, he should eat at night. He would

obtain the fruit of the vow thus duly concluded. (Even) a drunkard who would drink liquor from birth to death obtains the highest position by observing this Bhīṣma-vow. By the words (i.e. order) of a brāhmaṇa, women should observe it, which enchances religious merit. Widows also should observe it for salvation, and an increase in their happiness. O Kārtikeya, men observe the Kārtika(vow) by bathing everyday and (giving) gifts for abundance of (the fulfilment of) all desires and for (obtaining) religious merit. O child, greatly engrossed in meditation upon Viṣṇu, they should also perform the Vaiśvadeva sacrifice (in honour of all deities), which gives health and sons and destroys great sins.

70-78. O Kārtikeya, with all efforts he should observe the Kārtika (vow) at holy places. The conclusion of all the vows (observed) during the year is observed in Kārtika. An image of Sin should be fashioned. It should have fearful clothes and should be very fierce. It should have a sword in its hand; it should have come out (i.e. should be prominent); it should have iron fangs and be dreadful. Covered with a black piece of cloth it should be put on a prastha (i.e. a particular measure) of sesamum seeds. Its wreath should be made of red flowers; its golden earrings should be bright. Having, with great devotion, worshipped it with (the utterance of) the names of Dharmarāja, he taking a handful of flowers, should recite this hymn: 'Due to the grace of your feet may the sin committed in another (i.e. previous) existence or in this, perish.' Having duly worshipped that golden image, and having, according to his capacity honoured the brāhmaṇas, expounders of the Vedas, he should, to please Kṛṣṇa, god of gods, of unimpaired acts, give it to a brāhmaṇa (saying) 'May Dharma be pleased with me.' According to his capacity he should give presents to the reader (of the next). Saying, 'May Kṛṣṇa be pleased with me', he should give gold and cows also. Having done his deeds, and being detached, he should be controlled. According to his capacity he should give excellente gifts to others also.

79-83. (Such) a man, of a tranquil mind, and guiltless, would obtain the highest position. He should reflect upon Mahādeva who is dark green like the petal of a blue lotus, who has four fangs and four arms, who has eight feet, and one eye,

who is spike-eared and has a rough voice, who is cold, who has two tongues, whose eyes are red, who has a lion-like thin cover. He has no form. Bhīṣma, being on the bed of arrows told this to me. This vow known as Bhīṣmapañcaka on the earth, is confined to five days beginning with Ekādaśī. There is no prohibition for him who is intent on taking food. Due to that vow Viṣṇu gives an auspicious fruit.

Sūta said:

84-88. This has more religious merit than all (other) vows. It is difficult to be done on the earth. This secret, the collection of the essences of the sacred texts, is told by me. It is a secret of the gods. It is a great secret. It at once gives salvation even to those who are engaged in illicit intercourse. It would free one from both the sins of selling one's daughter or one's sister. This sacred text leading to salvation should not be revealed to other people. A man hearing it at once goes to salvation. It should be carefully preserved. This auspicious (vow) is not to be told to them who give it up. This is the truth and the (only) truth, O Kārtikeya. Thus all the fruit that Kārtika has is told.

Śrī Viṣṇu said:

89-96. The god of gods told it to his son for his welfare. Hearing those words of his father, Kārtikeya was full of joy. All those, with the palms of their hands joined, said to the god, the life of the world: "We are blessed by hearing the fruit due to Kārtika. Nothing else is to be heard. I have obtained the fruit of my existence." That man who, having heard (this description of) the greatness (of the vow), would honour the reader (of it) with (the grant of a piece of) land, gold, garments, is equal to Viṣṇu, since when the reader is honoured, Viṣṇu is worshipped. Like that he should always give to the reader if he desires the auspicious religious texts, Purāṇa, or Vedic texts, etc. to be fruitful. One who desires religious merit should give the book to the reader only. Those who give the Purāṇic texts, enjoy inexhaustible fruits. He who would devoutly read this, or would retain it after having heard it, is freed from all sins, and goes to Viṣṇu's heaven. There is no doubt that merely by listening to the (account of this) importance, he gets wealth, grains, fame, sons, (long) life, and good health.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWENTYFIVE

The Importance of Māgha As Told by Bhṛgu

The sages said:

1-3. O Sūta, O noble Sūta, you, desiring the well-being of the world have narrated the account of Kārtika giving pleasures and salvation. O Lomaharṣaṇi, now tell us about the importance of Māgha, hearing which the great doubt of people diminishes. Tell us who formerly revealed the greatness of the bath in Māgha along with its history, O noble one.

Sūta said:

4-9. Good! good! O best sages, you are greatly devoted to Kṛṣṇa. Since you with joy and devotion repeatedly ask Kṛṣṇa's story, I shall tell you the greatness of Māgha that increases the religious merit and destroys the sin of those who have bathed at dawn. O brāhmaṇas, once Pārvatī, touching the lotus-like feet of Śaṅkara with modesty, asked him, the benefactor of the world:

Pārvatī said:

O god of gods, O great god, O you who grant fearlessness to your devotees, be pleased, O lord of the universe. Tell me what I ask you now. O master, formerly I heard from you many kinds of religious practices. Now I desire to hear the greatness of Māgha. Tell it. Since you love your devotees, tell me who observed it formerly, what is the mode (of observing it), which is the deity. Tell (me) all that in detail.

Śiva said:

10-24. King Dilīpa, best among kings, whose auspicious rites were performed by the sages after the ablution after a sacrifice, who was honoured by all citizens, went out of his city. The king was interested in hunting. He was full of curiosity, and was surrounded by an assemblage for hunting. He had put on his shoes, a blue turban and had covered his chest. He had a leathern fence fastened round his left arm to prevent injury

from the bow string, had a finger-protector, and a bow in his hand and a sword. (He was accompanied) by archers with small swords, so also foot soldiers like that. The young (king), brave like a lion, gladly sported with them in the bowers, looking for game in very charming large thickets in Gandhāra. He crossed great streams. 'Kill him, kill him; this deer is fleeing.' Speaking like this to his servants, he himself jumped and killed it. Again he moved here and there observing at places the forest-ground which was crowded with groups of frightened peacocks, that flew to the trees and hid themselves. It was full of fear of the herds of (frightened) female deer. In its various directions young ones of deer were running. It was fierce due to the sharp howls of jackals at places. The forest at places bore the beauty of elephants due to the groups of young rhinoceroses (*obscure*). At places it was resounding with the hooting of owls resorting to the hollows of trees. At places it was marked with the impressions of the paws of lions. At places it was red due to the blood of the rohita deer, torn apart by the nails of tigers. At places it suggested to the mind (that it was) the ground in the courtyard of the harem due to the groups of the Mahiṣīs (buffaloes/queens) troubled by the burden of their stout (udders) breasts. At places it was covered with dense trees, and was fragrant with wild flowers. It at places had doors in the form of creepers, and was very charming with the humming of bees. It had large holes fearful due to serpents whose sloughs had partly come out. It was fearful due to the large serpents hiding in it, and spreading sloughs. It at places had the flames of wild fire, and very beautiful due to lustre from stones; it was full of the hissing sounds; it was crowded with deer and tigers. At places he let loose the group of his dogs against rabbits. Having rested at the (banks of) ponds he went to another forest.

25-39. When the lord of kings was going like this, and the group of hunters was swaggering, he saw a deer making a loud noise and moving out of a thicket. With hasty strides it crossed the ground having inaccessible paths. At times it jumped into the air, and at times it was seen on the ground. The king, following its footsteps, entered an impassable forest very imperious due to crooked streams and full of thorny trees. The king, going further and further away and from one solitary region to

another, had his neck and throat dry due to the excitement caused by (his) not (being able) to see the deer. His palate and face had become red. He was perspiring. His footmen were tired; his voice was wavering. After having passed over long ways, he, oppressed with thirst, saw, when the sun had gone to the middle (of the sky, i.e. at noon), before him a lake that vied with the ocean, on the bank of which there were dense trees, which was a holy place, was clean and auspicious. It was large; the lotuses in it had bloomed; the bees were intoxicated with honey. It was covered with green lotus-leaves like emeralds. The fish in it was leaping at will like the clean mind of a good man. It was full of moving aquatic animals. It was adorned with the rows of waves. Like the mind of the wicked, it was rough inside due to the groups of crocodiles; at places, it was, due to moss, inaccessible like a miser's house. Day and night it pacified all the afflictions of various birds. Like donors with all their belongings it destroyed the afflictions of those that resorted to it. With its water it gratified the wild beasts like its own dead ancestors. Like the moon it removed all the heat of the day. Seeing it, he was free from languor like a cātaka on seeing a cloud. Having drunk water there, and having performed the mid-day rites, the king ate, with his companions, the flesh of the game. He, telling charming stories, stayed on its bank, and keeping his arrow fixed to the bow (string), he rested on the bank at night. The hunters, fixing their arrows to the bow strings, blocked the paths of the directions. When the warriors remained like this, having spread the nets, at night on every bank a herd of hogs moved out, and having eaten the bulbs in the lake, jumped (before) the crowd of the hunters.

40-48. The king pierced the hogs; and many were killed by the hunters. In a moment, the hogs that were pierced, fell on the ground. Seeing them, the very proud hunters made an uproar, and running with great joy, gathered where the king stayed. Bringing them through his soldiers, he left the bank of the lake. Desiring to go (back) to his city he saw an ascetic on the way. (He saw) the brāhmaṇa, old Hārīta, well adorned with a conch and disc, with his body emaciated due to restraints difficult to observe and intense. He remained only in bones (i.e. had become skeleton-like), he was highly restrained, and his skin

had become rough. He wore a deer-skin, and put on a soft-bark-garment. He was muttering hymns from the Vedas. He had long nails and hair and matted hair. Seeing that hermit, and giving him passage, the king, with respect saluted him with his head (bent) and the hollows of his hands resembling a lotus joined. The brāhmaṇa (i.e. Hārīta), taking him to be a king from his ornaments, and with a desire for obliging others, and for bringing about his welfare said (to him): "At this meritorious and auspicious time, for what purpose are you going, O king, avoiding (i.e. not taking) a morning bath in the month of Māgha?" Then the king replied, "O best brāhmaṇa, I do not know.

49-57. Tell me in detail what kind of fruit the Māgha bath has." Hearing these words of the king, the ascetic said: "O king, the glorious sun, removing the darkness, is quickly rising. This is the time for our bath and not the time for a talk. After bathing, go to Vasiṣṭha, and ask him, the master of your family." Saying so the anchorite, observing silence, went for his morning bath. The hero Dilīpa too, turning back, and bathing there with the proper rite, and full of joy went to his own city. In his harem he again told the account of the anchorite. Having got into a chariot having white horses, and with a white umbrella and white chowries (he went to Vasiṣṭha's hermitage). Being adorned, having put on good garments and surrounded by his ministers, and repeatedly hearing the cries of victory made by the panegyrists and bards, he remembering the words of the sage, went to Vasiṣṭha's hermitage. There only he saluted the brāhmaṇa sage with politeness. Being given a seat, he accepted the respectful offering, and was adorned with blessings; and when the sage asked the king about his well-being, the king, delighting the sage's mind spoke the words. He of a sweet form asked (Vasiṣṭha) about what the anchorite had told him.

Dilīpa said:

58-60. O glorious one, by your grace I have, in detail, heard (from you) about the practices, administration of justice, and the great duties of a king, so also the duties of the four castes and stages of human life; so also gifts, and the manners in which they are given; so also sacrifices and rites; so also the

vows told by him, and about Viṣṇu's worship. Now I desire to know the fruit to be had from Māgha bath along with the manner in which it is done. O brāhmaṇa, O sage, tell it to me.

Vasiṣṭha said:

61-71a. That sage, living in the forest, has properly told the highest bliss, bringing about the good of the three worlds, and removing the sin. Those not defeated by the glances of beautiful women (though) in proximity, desire to bathe in the stream when the Sun is in Capricornus. O dear one, those who desire beatitude without (offerings into) fire, sacrifices, without performing sacrifices and digging wells and doing other acts of charity, go out to bathe every morning in Māgha. O king, those who desire (salvation) without giving (a piece of) land, a cow, gold, rubies, cows fashioned with gold etc. bathe in Māgha. Those who desire (to go to) heaven without parching their bodies with the vows lasting for three weeks, the Kṛcchra and Pārāka, always bathe in Māgha. Viṣṇu's worship in Vaiśākha, penance and worship in Kārtika, and the three, viz. penance, sacrifice and gifts, excel (everything else). A man having a planned conclusion (of these) would certainly become the lord of the earth, due to which there would again be no idea leading to salvation (*obscure*). That worship (including) fasting, penance and (giving) gifts in the month of Māgha, O best king, was laid down by those having divine eyes. For (fulfilling) a desire, or for progeny, or for Viṣṇu or (even) without (any of these) one observing the vow of purifying his body (has) four kinds of fruit obtained by bathing. For twelve years Aditi without taking food bathed (daily) in Māgha and obtained twelve sons illuminating the three worlds. Rohiṇī became a favourite wife; Arundhatī became exceedingly liberal; Śacī was endowed with beauty.

71b-86. Those who bathe when the Sun is in the Capricornus sign of the Zodiac, happily live in a palace which has seven storeys, is endowed with beauty due to being cleaned, the courtyard of which is charming with dancers, crowded with beautiful women, which is resounding with singing and musical instruments, which is charming with auspicious practices, which

is pure due to the sounds of (the recital of) the Vedas, which is adorned by learned brāhmaṇas, which is constantly used in worshipping deities, which is charming, which is always resorted to by guests. For those who have given much in Māgha, have worshipped and praised Viṣṇu, Māgha always produces religious merit due to their abandoning dear objects and observing restraints. Māgha cuts off the root of their sins; it is the root of desired objects through giving fruits; it without a desire and always gives knowledge. Those worlds which are secured by those disposed to (securing) knowledge, by those living in forests (i.e. anchorites), by devotees of Viṣṇu, are always secured by those who bathe in Māgha. O hero, due to having (exhansted) religious merit, other men return from heaven; but men given to bathing in Māgha never return. A man who, having bathed in Māgha, gives a milch cow (to a brāhmaṇa), is honoured in heaven for as many thousand years as are the small hair on her entire body, O best king. A man who bathes in Māgha and would give sesamum seeds with jaggery, shines spotless, having washed his sin. Of all the heaps of grains sesamum seeds destroy the sins. Therefore, O best king, sesamum seeds should be given with (every) effort. A man bathing in Māgha should feed brāhmaṇas. He, of a pure soul, after gratifying his dead ancestors, goes to the highest position of Viṣṇu. Therefore, with all efforts Māgha is passed in giving gifts (by men). O best king, a man should not pass Māgha without (giving) a gift. Knowing his (i.e. according to his) wealth he should always give gifts in Māgha. He who would bathe in Māgha and who gives sandals and pitchers to brāhmaṇas, certainly lives in heaven. A man practising the excellent penance of bathing in Māgha, should never pass it without (giving) a gift. Heaven is obtained through charity.

87-89. O king, heaven is obtained through giving (gifts). Happiness is obtained through giving (gifts). Blemish due to great sin perishes due to giving (gifts). Penance without giving (gifts) does not shine like the sky without the sun, or a family without progeny, or a house without good practices. There is nothing superior to this, that is pure and that destroys sins. (This) was related to a vidyādhara by Bhṛgu on Maṇi mountain.

The king said:

90. O brāhmaṇa, when did that brāhmaṇa Bhṛgu give him the instruction in the religious practice on the mountain. Tell it to me, (as I am asking it) through curiosity.

Vasiṣṭha said:

91-94. O king, formerly the clouds did not shower (water) for twelve years. People being afflicted and emaciated, went into all the ten directions. When, O king, at that time the region between Himālaya and Vindhya had become barren, was devoid of the utterances of *svāhā*, *svahdā* and *vaṣaṭ*, and the study of the Vedas, when the world was in distress, when piety had disappeared, and when the world had become lustreless, when the globe was void of fruits, roots, food and water, Bhṛgu, along with his disciples, moved out of his hermitage on the charming bank of Revā covered with trees of Vindhya mountain, and went to the Himālaya mountain.

95-110. There, to the west of Kailāsa mountain, stands a mountain, known as Maṇikūṭa—a heap of gold, gems and red arsenic. The mountain is crystal-like white in the lower parts, has dark blue slabs in the middle; and surrounded by grandeur on all sides, and white, it shone like Śiva. It is dark-blue everywhere, and has golden lines in between. It shines like a cloud with the streak of lightning flashing. At the top the mountain has dark blue rocks. Below (it) it has a golden girdle. It shines like Viṣṇu wearing a yellow garment. Appearing very dark green without the girdle, it has white rocks (at places) in the middle. The mountain shone like the sky with stars. It shone like another moon that had secured his own white body, that bore divine herbs, and that diffused great light. The mountain always shone with the music of kinnarīs on its table-lands, with bamboos, and with the banners in the form of the leaves of plantain trees. The mountain was as it were covered with rainbows due to the circles of the rays of lustre of the sharp rocks of green stones, lapis lazuli, and rubies. It was well adorned with gold, full of all minerals, various gems; it was covered everywhere with lofty peaks like flames of fire. Vidyādhara women overcome with sexual desire come to its slopes having grass and

big rocks and serve their husbands. The detached ones, having restrained their breath, and having overcome anger, day and night meditate upon Brahman in its caves. Siddhas, with rosaries and (sacred) threads in their hands, with their eyes half-open, propitiate Śiva in the beautiful caves. This (mountain), having rendered fragrant the quarters with the fragrance of the mandāra flowers, is always noisy with the murmuring sound of the water of the mountain torrents. The mountain is always charming due to the young ones of the elephants and the elephants in the forest playing in the lands at its foot, due to herds of musk-deer and charming spotted antelopes, so also due to the sporting flocks of camaras and strange wild beasts, cooing pigeons, cakoras and cuckoos also, so also due to royal swans and peacocks. It is always resorted to by gods, guhyakas and bevies of celestial damsels.

The king said:

111-117. The mountain is full of many wonders; it is the resort of all (kinds of) prosperity. O revered one, what is its height? What is its length? How extensive is it?

The sage said:

At (i.e. up to) its top it is thirtysix yojanas in height. Its length and expanse are ten yojanas. At the foot it is sixteen yojanas. It is adorned with the rows of yellow sandal (trees), mandāra (trees) and mango (trees). It is crowded with devadāru trees, and is adorned with sarala and arjuna (trees). The best mountain, always giving flowers and fruits, shines with kālāgaru trees, clove trees, so also with arbours and bowers. On seeing that beautiful mountain, Bhṛgu who was oppressed with famine, was mentally delighted and lived there only. (On the charming mountain, in its caves and thickets) Bhṛgu well-engrossed in penance, practised penance for a long time. Getting down from the mountain a vidhyādhara couple came (there). Approaching the sage, saluting him, it very much grieved, and stayed there.

118-130a. Seeing them like that the brāhmaṇa spoke sweet words: "O vidyādhara, tell me in a friendly way why you are so much unhappy." Hearing the sage's words, the vidyādhara said

to the brāhmaṇa: "O best among the ascetics, listen to the cause of my unhappiness. Having obtained the fruit of my religious merit, I reached heaven. Though I got a deity's (i.e. a divine) body, my face was like a tiger's. I do not know of which deed (of mine) this effect came up. Again and again thinking like this, I did not obtain pleasure. O brāhmaṇa, listen to this another (thing) due to which my mind is afflicted. This my wife is auspicious, of a sweet voice and beautiful. She is proficient in the arts of dancing and singing; she possesses all good qualities. When she was a maiden, she, the spotless one, playing upon the lute, very much delighted, with the seven strings, sage Nārada skilled in playing upon the lute. This one, having a lovely voice, pleased, even in her childlike state, the lord of gods, conversant with charming tunes. Hearing the fifth note, sweet due to many winding modes (of singing) of her with her body horripilating due to eagerness while playing upon the lute, Śiva nodding his head, and horripilated, was delighted. No other beautiful woman having the grace of good character, generosity, (other) hosts of virtues, beauty and youth, like her, is (to be found) in heaven. 'What a great disparity is there between this divine-faced female and a tiger-faced male like me?' O brāhmaṇa, always thinking like this in my mind, I am burning." Hearing these words, Bhṛgu, Ikṣvāku's son, having a divine eye, and knowing the three times, laughed and said:

130b-138a. "O best vidyādhara, listen to the strange fruit of (one's) deeds. Having obtained it, the wise are not deluded, but the ignorant are deluded. As poison, just of the measure of the wing of a bee is dangerous, similarly even a small act, not enjoined, is dangerous in its effect. Having fasted on Ekādaśī, you smeared your body with oil. Due to that you have become tiger-faced in the body of the previous existence on Dvādaśī. Formerly Purūravas, having fasted on the auspicious Ekādaśī but having used oil on the Dvādaśī obtained, like you, an ugly body. Seeing his ugly body, he was pained by that affliction. He went to the lord of mountains on the lake of the deities, and staying there with great joy, he bathed, and being pure, (sat on) a darbha-seat. The king, fasting, and, having controlled all his senses, and reflecting in his mind on Viṣṇu, dark green like a fresh cloud, having large lotus-like eyes, holding a conch, a disc, a mace and a lotus,

covered with a yellow garment, shining with Kaustubha, wearing a garland of wood-flowers, practised a very severe penance for three months.

138b-151. Pleased with the small penance, Viṣṇu, remembering his being worshipped by the king during the (previous) seven existences, himself appeared before him on the Dvādaśī of the bright half of Māgha when the Sun was in Capricornus. Having quickly sprinkled that emperor with water from his conch, Viṣṇu, reminding him of his having used the oil, gave him an extremely handsome, lovely, charming form, due to (i.e. seeing) which goddess Urvaśī, the divine lady, loved him. The king who had obtained the boon, being blessed, went to his city. "Knowing the way of one's acts to be like this, why are you afflicted, O vidyādhara? If you too desire to give up this ugliness of a demon, then, on my words only, quickly take bath in the water of the river Maṇikūṭa which removes old sins, and which is resorted to by sages, siddhas and gods in the month of Māgha. I shall tell you its manner. Due to your (good) luck, Māgha is near, (commencing) on the fifth day (from today). Beginning with the Ekādaśī of Pauṣa, and sleeping on a bare ground, and going without food, bathe three times (a day) for a month and worship Viṣṇu three times (a day), giving up pleasures and restraining your senses till the Ekādaśī in the bright half of Māgha, O best vidyādhara. Then, O god, O sinless one, having sprinkled you with auspicious water purified with hymns, I shall make the face of you who will have completely burnt your sins, resembling the face of Cupid on the holy day of Dvādaśī. O best vidyādhara, then having the face like that of a god, sport as you like, with this (lady) of an excellent complexion. You who have known the prowess of Māgha, always bathe in Māgha, so that your desires will be always fulfilled." That noble and omniscient Bhṛgu, having thus spoken to him, recited to him the (following) verse:

152-164. "By means of baths in Māgha, calamities perish. By means of baths in Māgha sins perish. Māgha is superior to all sacrifices, and gives the fruit of (all kinds of) charity. Māgha roars (louder) than sacrifices. Māgha roars (louder) than abstract meditation. And O vidyādhara, Māgha roars (louder) than severe penance. The fruit which men obtain by (observing) restraints

for ten years at Puṣkara, Kurukṣetra, Brahmāvarta having profuse water, at Avimukta, Prayāga, confluence of Gaṅgā and the ocean, is obtained by bathing for three days in Māgha. There is no doubt. Those, in whose mind there is, for a long time, interest in heaven, should bathe in water anywhere when the Sun is in Capricornus. Those who desire to have qualities like (long) life, (good) health, wealth, handsomeness, good fortune, should not give up bathing in Māgha. So also those who are afraid of hell, of poverty that is heaped, should by all means bathe in the month of Māgha. O best king, for washing off the mud of poverty, sins and bad luck, there is no other remedy than a bath in Māgha. Acts done without faith give small fruits. (But) a bath in Māgha gives the entire fruit. He who, with or without a desire, bathes anywhere outside (his house) in water, does not have sorrows in this or in the next world. As in the two fortnights the Moon waxes and wanes, in the same way in Māgha sins decrease and the heap of religious merit increases. As various gems come up from a mine, so religious merit of men springs up due to a bath in Māgha. As the desire-yielding cow fulfils the desire, or the desire-yielding gem gives the desired object, so a bath in Māgha fulfils all desires in the world.

165-166. Penance is the best in Kṛtayuga, knowledge in Tretāyuga, sacrifice in Dvāpara, knowledge (devotion?) in Kaliyuga, and Māgha in all the ages. The bath in Māgha, O king, showers with the streams of merit all the castes and the stages of life."

Vasiṣṭha said:

167-171. Having heard these words of Bhṛgu, that divine being along with Bhṛgu only bathed according to the manner told (in sacred texts) with his wife in that hermitage on the mountain on the bank of a river in Māgha. Then having secured, through the grace of Bhṛgu, what was desired by his mind, he having a divine face, rejoiced on the Maṇi-mountain. Bhṛgu, having favoured him (and so) delighted came (back) to Vindhya. The vidyādhara, merely by bathing on the lord of mountains full of gems in Māgha, had his face and form like those of Cupid. Bhṛgu too, having his body emaciated due to restraints, got down at the foot of Vindhya and came to Revā along with his disciples. O

king, this importance of Māgha, the essence in the world, was told by the excellent brāhmaṇa Bhṛgu to the vidyādhara. He who listens to it, wonderful due to various fruits, would always secure all his charming desired objects like a deity.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWENTYSIX

The Importance of Māgha As Told by Dattātreya

Vasiṣṭha said:

1-2. O best king, now I shall tell you the importance of Māgha told by Dattātreya to Kārtavīrya who had asked (him about it). The king, the lord of Māhiṣmatī, went to that brāhmaṇa Dattātreya (who was) actually Viṣṇu, who lived on the Sahya mountain, and asked him (about the bath in Māgha).

Sahasrārjuna said:

3. O revered one, O best among the meditating saints, I have heard (about) all practices. O you of a good vow, favour me and tell me about the fruit of the bath in Māgha.

Dattātreya said:

4-18. O best king, listen to the auspicious answer to this question. This was formerly told by Brahmā to the illustrious Nārada. I shall tell you the great, entire fruit of the bath in Māgha according to the region, holy place, manner and rites. In this Bhāratavarṣa, especially in the land of religious rites the existence of those who do not have the bath in Māgha is said to be fruitless. A good act does not shine without the bath in Māgha, as the sky without the Sun or the cluster of stars without the Moon, O king. Viṣṇu is not so much pleased with vows, gifts, austerities as he is pleased just with a bath in Māgha. No (other) lustre resembles the Sun's lustre. Similarly the sacrificial rites do not resemble the bath in Māgha. A man should (daily) take a bath in Māgha to please Viṣṇu, to remove all sins, and for obtaining heaven. What is the use of preserving the well-nourished,

strong, uncertain, and impure body, if it would be without a bath in Māgha? The body is supported by bones, bound by sinews, besmeared with flesh and blood, covered with skin, has a bad smell and is a receptacle of urine and feces. It is pervaded by old age, affliction and calamities. It is an abode of diseases; it is sick; it is covered with dust. It is perishable. It is the abode of all blemishes. It torments others and is afflicted by torment. It deceives others. It is a great (i.e. strong) poison. It is greedy; it is wicked, cruel; it is ungrateful and momentary also. It is difficult to be filled, difficult to be borne, wicked, and is attended by the vitiation of the three humours. It is impure, exuding; it has cavities, and is deluded by the three humours. It is naturally engaged in impious acts. It is full of hundreds of desires. It stands at the gates of hell due to sexual desire, anger and great greed. It is full of worms and feces. It is reduced to ashes. It is, in effect, an oblation to dogs. Such a body is useless without (i.e. if it does not have) the bath in Māgha. Those who go without the bath in Māgha are born to die only like bubbles in water or pus in beings.

19-25. A brāhmaṇa not devoted to Viṣṇu is doomed. A srāddha without a meditating saint is worthless. A place which is unholy is worthless. A family without (good) practices is accursed. Religious practices accompanied by hypocrisy are worthless. Penance is doomed just by anger. Unstable knowledge is worthless. Learning is doomed by errors. A woman not devoted to the elders is wretched. A celibate is spoilt by her. Sacrifice into a fire that is not blazing is worthless. Enjoyment without a witness (i.e. companion) is worthless. A daughter affording a livelihood is condemned. Cooking for oneself is condemned. A sacrifice depending upon (articles) begged from a śūdra is worthless. Knowledge without practice is worthless. One opposing the king is doomed. A holy place (resorted to) for livelihood is worthless. A vow (undertaken) for livelihood is condemned. Speech void of truth is worthless; so also is calumny. An ambiguous hymn is worthless. Muttering prayers with a distracted mind is worthless. A gift (given) to a brāhmaṇa who is not learned, is worthless. Atheists are condemned. All that is done without faith for being useful in the next world is accursed.

26-39. O king, as this world is of no use for the poor, so the existence of men without the Māgha bath is accursed. How would he who does not bathe before sunrise when the Sun is in the sign of Capricornus, be freed from sins, or would go to heaven? A killer of a brāhmaṇa, he who would steal gold, a drunkard, he who violates his teacher's bed (i.e. wife) and the fifth one—their companion (i.e. abettor), become free from sin by bathing in Māgha. In the month of Māgha the waters shout somewhat (like this): We shall purify the killer of a brāhmaṇa, so also a drunkard who is trembling. When a man takes the Māgha bath, all his minor sins, so also all his major sins are reduced to ash. At the (time of) the union with the Māgha bath all sins tremble: 'This is the time of our destruction if he will bathe in the water.' Seeing a man ready to bathe (in Māgha) the sins cry like this. The best men shine like fires due to Māgha baths. They are free from all sins like the Moon from the clouds. The Māgha bath would burn sins—deliberate, non-deliberate, minor, major, and committed through speech, mind or (physical) act. The Māgha bath would burn sins as the fire (burns) the sacred fuel; so also a sin due to error committed knowingly or unknowingly. That would perish just by a bath when the Sun is in the (sign of) Capricornus. The sinless ones go to heaven; the most sinful are purified. O king, no doubt should be entertained about this Māgha bath. O king, all are entitled to (a bath) in Māgha as they are to the devotion to Viṣṇu. Māgha (bath) gives heaven to all; removes the sins of all. It is in itself a great hymn. It is in itself a great penance. That excellent bath in Māgha is a great expiation. Men have an inclination for Māgha bath after a practice for many existences, as, O king, proficiency in metaphysical knowledge (comes) after practice for many existences. O king, the Māgha bath is efficacious in washing off the smearing by mud in the form of the worldly existence.

40-41a. O king, the Māgha bath is the most purifying of all the purifying (objects). O king, how can those (men) who don't bath in Māgha which gives the fruits of all desires, enjoy pleasures like the planets Sun and Moon ?

41b-52. O king, listen to the great wonder due to the Māgha bath. A good brāhmaṇa lady, Kubjikā by name, belong-

ing to the Bhṛgu family, was afflicted by widowhood since her childhood; she practised a very difficult penance. At a great holy place, at the confluence of the Revā and Kapilā at the foot of Vindhya, observing a vow, and being highly devoted to Viṣṇu, she was always engaged in good practices, and always (living) without any company, had subdued her senses, her anger, spoke the truth, and talked little. She was of a good character, was given to charity and to parching up her body. Having offered oblations into the fire to her dead ancestors, deities and brāhmaṇas, she took food at the sixth time (i.e. once in three days), and always lived by gleaning grains; and by means of such vows as Kṛcchra, Atikṛcchra, Pārāka, Taptakṛcchra and others, she passed the auspicious months on the bank of Narmadā. In this way the lady, practising penance, wearing bark-garments, of a good character, of an extremely good disposition, and endowed with courage and contentment, bathed for sixty Māgha months at the confluence of Revā and Kapilā. O king, then she, emaciated due to the penance, died at that holy place. (And) due to that religious merit from the Māgha bath she lived in joy for four thousand yugas in Viṣṇu's city. Then, for the destruction of Sunda and Upasunda, she was again born from Brahmā's heaven, as Tilottamā. Due to the religious merit that was left, she was the sole object of beauty (i.e. was most beautiful). She, not born from the womb, the gem of a lady, deluding even the gods, the pool of beauty, slim, was the best among the celestial nymphs.

53-67a. She indeed caused wonder to the skilful creator Brahmā. The creator, having created her, was delighted; and then ordered her: "O you having (bewitching) eyes like those of a young one of a deer, quickly go for the destruction of the demons." Then that beautiful lady took a lute, went from Brahmā's heaven along the path by Puṣkara, to the place where the enemies of the gods (stood). Having bathed there in pure, clean water of Revā, she put on a red garment bright like the Badhūka flowers; her bracelets were jingling, and her girdle and anklets were sweetly tinkling. The necklace of pearls round her neck was moving; she was beautiful due to the unsteady ear-rings; she had worn the wreath of spring flowers; she stood by an aśoka tree. She sang with sweet tunes; she struck (the strings

of) her lute; she passed from one key to another of the six (keys of gamut), with smoothness, delicacy and with low and inarticulate tones. Thus that young Tilottamā stood in the Aśoka-grove. She, giving pleasure like a digit of the Moon, was seen by the demon-soldiers. Seeing her, the soldiers being delighted and without (properly) observing her, very quickly went to Sunda and Upasunda. Describing her again and again, they told about her in confusion: "O demons, we do not know whether she is a goddess or a demoness, or whether she is a nāga lady or a yakṣa lady, but she is by all means a gem of a lady. You two enjoy gems in the world, and that lady is a gem. She who removes sorrow, is under the aśoka tree, not far (from here). Go and quickly see her, deluding even Cupid." Hearing these charming words of their generals, the two abandoned their glass of liquor, gave up sprinkling with water, left thousands of excellent ladies, and from that lake they went, each one taking a separate mace that weighed a hundred bhāras, that was made of iron, that was hard, that resembled the staff of Death, speedily by jumping to that place where the passionate lady ready with a dress suited to amorous interviews had stood, as it were inflaming the fire of the passion of love of the two demons, O king.

67b-80. The two villains, infatuated by her beauty stood in front of her (and) especially being intoxicated due to liquor, said to each other: "O brother, wait, let me have this lady of an excellent complexion as my wife." "O good one, leave her—my wife—of bewitching eyes." Thus inflamed with strong attachment, and furious like elephants they, ordered by Death, struck each other with a mace, and by the strokes of each other fell down dead on the earth. Seeing them dead, the soldiers made a great noise: "Who is this, resembling the night of Death? What is this that has come up?" When (the soldiers in) the armies were speaking like this, Tilottamā, dropped Sunda and Upasunda on the peak of the mountain, and illumining the ten quarters she quickly proceeded to the sky. Having done the mission of the gods, she came to Brahmā. Then the delighted god approved of her (mission). "O you moon-faced one, I have allotted you a place on the Sun's chariot. Enjoy many pleasures as long as the Sun remains in the sky." O king, that brāhmaṇa lady

having thus become an excellent celestial nymph, even now enjoys the great fruit of the Māgha bath in the other world. Therefore, O king, men having faith (and desiring) to go to the best position, should always through effort bathe when the Sun is in Capricornus. There is no goal of human life not attained, there is no sin that is not destroyed of the man who bathes in Māgha. All sacrifices with presents are not equal to the Māgha bath, and especially at a holy place, O king, since, on the earth there is no other act giving heaven, or destroying sins, or giving salvation like the Māgha bath.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWENTYSEVEN

The Release of a Demon

Kārtavīrya said:

1-2. O brāhmaṇa of a good vow, tell me for which reason great efficacy is said (to exist) in Māgha. Also I wish to know the religious merit (collected) of a bath in Māgha by one of which the merchant was free from his sins and by another he went to heaven.

Dattātreya said:

3-26a. O best among men, water is naturally holy, clear, undefiled, whitish, removing dirt, causing (things) to melt, removing heat; it preserves all beings, nourishes them and is their (very) life. In all Vedas water is spoken of as the god Nārāyaṇa. As among the planets the Sun is the greatest, as among the stars the Moon is the best, so is Māgha among (all) months for all rites. In Māgha, when the Sun is in Capricornus, a morning bath in clear water even in a small puddle gives heaven even to sinners. In Māgha, O king, this combination is rare in the three worlds with the mobile and the immobile. During this combination even a weak person should bathe (in the morning) for three days and, even if incapable, should, with a desire for freedom from poverty, give something (to a

brāhmaṇa). Rich men live long by bathing thrice in Māgha. Or (they should bathe) for five or seven days. The fruit increases like (the waxing of) the Moon. When, the auspicious time of the Sun being in Capricornus, which gives religious merit to men, has come, all the days should be equally valued for acts like a bath or giving (gifts). To the doer (of the acts) they cause to give an eternal, inexhaustible position. Therefore, for the desire of his own good, a man should bathe outside (his house) in Māgha. Hereafter, I shall tell (you) about the great rite of bathing in Māgha. The best men should take up some religious observance of the nature of a vow. A wise man should give up some eatable for getting excellence in the fruit. He should sleep on the bare ground. He should offer into fire ghee mixed with sesamum. He should worship the ancient Vāsudeva, Viṣṇu, three times (everyday). He should offer a lamp (burning) continuously, dedicating it to Viṣṇu. (He) should (also) give fuel, a blanket, a garment, sandals, saffron and ghee. (So also) oil, heap of cotton, cotton bed, cotton wicks, cloth, so also food, according to his capacity in Māgha, O king. Similarly he should give gold weighing a rati to (a brāhmaṇa) proficient in the Vedas. Like the ocean the gift is always inexhaustible. He should not eat others' food (i.e. food offered by others). He should give up receiving gifts; at the end of Māgha he should feed brāhmaṇas according to his capacity, O king. Desiring his own good, he should offer them presents. He, having faith, should, by observing the Ekādaśī rite, conclude (the vow) of Māgha with a desire (to live) eternally in heaven, to get unending religious merit, and to please Viṣṇu. In Māgha, when the Sun is in Capricornus, he, having uttered the prayer, 'O god Govinda, Acyuta, Mādhava, give me the fruit as is told (in the holy texts) as a result of this bath', should silently and being calm bathe and should again remember Vāsudeva, Hari, Kṛṣṇa, Mādhava (i.e. Viṣṇu). Even in his house he should keep a pitcher full of water touched by air (i.e. kept in the open) at night. A bath with that (water) is like one at a holy place, giving all desired objects. With (i.e. by taking) a vow he should give (articles) with food and condiments. Due to the efficacy of that bath a man would not go to hell. That bath which men take with hot water at home when the Sun is in Capricornus, gives

fruit for six years. But a bath outside (the house), in a well etc. is said to give fruit for twelve years. A bath in a lake gives double the fruit, (while a bath) in a river gives four times the fruit. (A bath) in a natural pond gives hundred times the fruit, (so also) a hundred times in a great river; and a bath at the confluence of a great river has four hundred times the fruit.

26b-40. O king, a man merely by bathing in Gaṅgā gets a thousandfold fruit of this, when the Sun is in Capricornus. O best king, those who bathe in Gaṅgā in the month of Māgha, do not fall from heaven for (a period of) a thousand aggregates of the four ages. O king, a man who bathes in Gaṅgā in Māgha, has given a thousand (coins) of gold everyday. O best king, the sages have ordained that the bath in Māgha at the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā is a hundred thousand times (fruitful). O king, the lord of beings, engaged in the welfare of the worlds, fashioned Prayāga for burning the great burden of heaps of sins. Listen properly. This place having black and white water is formerly made for the beings in the form of sins (i.e. sinful). He, though full of hundreds of sins, who would bathe at (Prayāga having) black and white water in Māgha when the Sun is in Capricornus, does not sink in a womb (i.e. is not reborn). Even that man engaged in killing at a slaughter house, who would bathe at Prayāga, goes to the highest position, O best among men. The creator created that, viz. the black and white stream, filled with Sarasvatī, as a path to Viṣṇu's world. Viṣṇu's illusion is difficult to cross. It is not easily overcome even by gods. But, O king, it is burnt at Prayāga in Māgha. By bathing at Prayāga in Māgha men, after having many pleasures in lustrous worlds, merge into the Disc-holder (i.e. Viṣṇu). Even Citragupta is not able to measure the religious merit of him who bathes in the black and white water at Prayāga in Māgha when the Sun is in the Capricornus. Even Brahmā is not able to describe the greatness of the religious merit of him who bathes at Prayāga in the black and white water in Māgha when the Sun is in Capricornus. That fruit which is had by fasting for a hundred years is had by bathing for three days at Prayāga in Māgha. That fruit which is obtained by the gift of gold weighing a thousand bhāras at Kurukṣetra is had by bathing daily at

the place where Gaṅgā joins Yamunā and receives underground Sarasvatī in Māgha when the Sun is (in Capricornus).

41-51. O king, the fruit of a thousand Rājasūya sacrifices is not so complete as that of the baths in Māgha at Prayāga (where the water) is black and white. O best king, all the holy places that there are on the earth, so also the seven (holy) cities, come to bathe at the confluence of the three rivers (Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī) in Māgha. Due to the blemish of the contact with the sinners all holy places are darkened. Due to bathing in Māgha at Prayāga they get a white complexion (i.e. are purified). The sin collected from the beginning of the kalpa, and during (many) existences of those bathing at Prayāga is reduced to ash, O king. The sin of a man due to speech, mind and body, who has bathed for three days at Prayāga in Māgha would certainly perish. A man who bathes for three days at Prayāga in Māgha, sheds off his sin as a serpent does his slough, and goes to heaven. Gaṅgā bathed in anywhere is like Kurukṣetra. When it is united with Vindhya it is ten times more meritorious. Gaṅgā flowing northwards in (i.e. by) Kāśī is hundred times superior. Gaṅgā in confluence with Yamunā is hundred times superior to Kāśī (i.e. to what she is at Kāśī). She flowing westwards would be a thousand times superior to those, which, O king, merely by her sight removes the sin of the murder of a brāhmaṇa. O king, that (stream of) Gaṅgā flowing westward and joining Yamunā destroys sins committed in crores. It is difficult to have (a bath in) her in Māgha. That which is called nectar is said to be the confluence of the three rivers on the earth. (To bathe) in it even for a short time in Māgha is difficult even for gods.

52-58a. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Rudras, Ādityas, the host of Maruts, Gandharvas, Regents of Quarters, Yakṣas, Kinnaras, Pannagas (i.e. serpents), so also those who are endowed with the supernatural powers like aṇimā (i.e. reducing the body to an atomic size), those who are the expounders of the true nature (of things), so also Brahmāṇī, Pārvatī, Lakṣmī, Śacī, Menā, Aditi and Diti—all these wives of gods, so also the Nāga females, similarly the hosts of the celestial damsels like Ghṛtācī, Menakā, Rambhā, Urvaśī and Tilottamā, and the hosts of the dead ancestors—all these come to bathe at the confluence of

the three rivers in Māgha, O king. (They come to bathe) in their own forms in Kṛtayuga, and with their forms concealed in Kaliyuga. That fruit which is obtained by a man by means of bathing in Māgha at Prayāga for three days, is not obtained by (performing) a thousand horse-sacrifices on the earth. Formerly Kāñcanamālinī gave the fruit of bathing in Māgha for three days to a demon, O king. The sinner got free (from sins) due to that.

Kārtavīrya said:

58b-59. O revered one, who is that demon? Who is that Kāñcanamālinī? How did she give him her religious merit? What good position did he have? If you think it is fit to be heard by me—for I have a great curiosity (to hear it)—then, O best of the meditating saints, O sun to the progeny of Atri, tell it (to me).

Dattātreya said:

60-68. O king, listen to this wonderful, ancient account by merely recollecting which a man would get the fruit of a Vājapeya. Kāñcanamālinī, a celestial nymph endowed with beauty, (used to) bathe at Prayāga in the month of Māgha and go to Śiva's temple. That old demon, standing in the form of a huge rock in a bower on the lordly mountain, saw her to have gone up into the sky. She was bright, resembled bright gold (in complexion); her buttocks were round; her eyes were long (i.e. large); her face resembled the moon; her hair was good; her breasts were raised and plump. Seeing her endowed with beauty, the demon said to her: "O you having eyes like lotus-petals, wherefrom do you come? Why is your garment wet? Due to what is your braid wet? O timid one, whence do you come? Due to what can you move in the sky? O good one, due to what religious merit is your body lustrous, endowed with great beauty, and charming? O you of fine eyes, due to the drops (of water) having fallen from your garment on my head my mind which is always cruel has become tranquil (just) in a moment. Please tell me, what great efficacy the water has. You appear to me of a good character. A (fine) figure is never without virtues."

The celestial nymph said:

69-86. O demon, listen. I am a celestial nymph taking any form I like. I have come from Prayāga. My name in Kāñcana-mālinī. The cloth worn round my loins is wet, since I have well-bathed at Prayāga. O demon, I have to go to Kailāsa, the best mountain. There lives Pārvatī's lord, well-worshipped by gods and demons. O demon, your cruelty has gone due to the efficacy of the water at the confluence of the three rivers. I shall tell you all that religious merit by means of which I was born as the daughter of a divine form to the gandharva, Sumedhas. I was a courtesan of the king—the lord of Kaliṅga. I was endowed with a good form and beauty; I was madly proud of my good fortune. In his city I was the crest-jewel (i.e. best) of other young ladies. O demon, in that existence, I enjoyed pleasures as I liked. Due to the excellence of my beauty I deluded the entire city. I, having a bewitching form, obtained all this—gems, beautiful ornaments, and wealth; so also garments of various kinds, camphor and agaru sandal. O demon, in my house I did not know end (i.e. limit) to gold. Youths, oppressed by passion of love, shampooed my feet. All those were fraudulently duped by me (and deprived) of their wealth. Some lustful ones died as a result of vying with one another. In this way I moved in that entire beautiful city. But when old age came, my heart grieved. I had not given (gifts). I had not offered oblations into fire. I had not observed any vow. I had not propitiated any god giving the four goals (of human life). I had not worshipped Durgā who destroyed misery. I, greedy of enjoyments, had not remembered Viṣṇu who destroyed all sins. I had not gratified brāhmaṇas. I had done no good to beings. Through carelessness I did not practise merit even of the size of an atom. But, O good one, I had committed sins. Therefore, my mind burnt. Having moaned like this in many ways, I sought the refuge of a brāhmaṇa, the priest of the king, who was pious and was proficient in the Vedas. O demon, I asked him: "How would I atone for this sin? O best brāhmaṇa, how would I go to (i.e. obtain) the best position (i.e. salvation). You, seizing the hair of me who am tormented by my own acts, who am helpless, whose mind is afflicted, who am sunk into the mud of sins, lift me up. Oh!

shower on me a pleasing look, the water of pity. All are good to a good man. But a good man is good (even) to a bad man." Hearing these words of (i.e. uttered by) me, he favoured me. The brāhmaṇa spoke pleasing words, full of all piety.

The brāhmaṇa said:

87-97. O you beautiful lady, I have understood all your behaviour which was (really) prohibited. Do quickly what I say. Go to the holy place of Brahmā. Having gone there, have a bath. Thereby your sin will perish. O good lady, all your thoughts have pained me. I do not see any other expiation, destroying sins (than) a bath at a holy place which is said to be excellent by the sages. One should give up at a holy place even an impious act done mentally. Purified by a bath at Prayāga you will surely go to heaven. There is no doubt that men obtain (i.e. go to) heaven merely by means of a bath at Prayāga. O beautiful young lady, the sin committed at any other place than a holy place perishes at Prayāga. O timid one, listen. Formerly Indra had approached the wife of (the sage) Gautama. Seeing her he was overcome with passion; the libidinous one approached her secretly. Due to that severe sin the same fruit was produced. The body of Indra, going to (i.e. cohabiting with) the sage's wife, became, in her presence, censurable, condemnable and shameful. Due to the efficacy of her husband's curse it was marked with pudenda muliebre. Then, with his face hung down (in shame), the king of gods went from that place. He, subdued and ashamed, condemned his act. Having gone to Meru's peak, full of water and extending over a hundred yojanas, he entered the bud of a golden lotus. Remaining there he censured himself and Cupid.

98-113a. Fie upon that lust, which at once gives (i.e. produces) sin, and due to which, a man condemned by the entire world, goes to hell! So also it destroys (a man's) life, fame, glory, piety and courage. Fie upon Cupid, of a bad conduct, and the sure place of calamities, living in the body, an enemy difficult to be vanquished, not contented, and always uncontrollable!. Thus Indra, concealed in the lotus-abode, talked. O timid one, heaven did not look charming without Indra. Therefore, gods with Gandharvas, regents of quarters with Kinnaras,

came with Śacī to Bṛhaspati and asked him: "Revered sir, we do not know (where) god Indra (has gone). Where does he stay, where has he gone, where shall we look for him? With the gods (but) without him, heaven does not look charming, as a virtuous family without a good son. Immediately think about a remedy by which heaven will look charming. He, the lord, is endowed with great glory. Delay is not proper here." Hearing these words of them Bṛhaspati said (these) words: "I know where he stays as a result of his own guilt. That Indra undergoes the fruit of his act done rashly. Terrible effects would take place due to men's giving up the right course. Oh, being mad with pride of (possessing) a kingdom, he, not thinking what ought not to be done, did (this) censurable act, destroying the (effects of) visible and invisible (acts). The childish ones, with their minds impaired do (acts) due to which fault the existence in this world and in the next would be fruitless. We shall now go to the place where Indra is." On his speaking like this, all led by Bṛhaspati set out. Seeing the grove (i.e. bed) of golden lotuses in a vast lake, they praised the king of gods in such a way that he would awake, Then due to the awakening done by Bṛhaspati, he came out of the lotus-bud. With a melancholy face, and deformed, with his eyes contracted due to shame, he seized the feet of Bṛhaspati who was elder (brother). "O Bṛhaspati, protect me; tell me the atonement for this sin."

113b-131a. Hearing the words of the king of gods, the brāhmaṇa, Bṛhaspati, spoke: "O lord of gods, listen, I shall tell you a remedy destroying your sin. By taking a bath only in Prayāga you will be instantly free from the sin. O lord of gods, with you only we shall go there." Then coming with the priest, Indra bathed at the holy place, Prayāga, and was instantly freed from sins. The preceptor of gods, being pleased, gave him a boon: "O sinless one, merely by a bath at Prayāga, your sin has vanished. O Śakra, due to my grace, you whose sin has perished, will have a thousand eyes in place of these thousand vulvas." Just then, by the words of Bṛhaspati the lord of Śacī shone (there) with the thousand eyes like the Mānasa lake with lotuses. Then all the deities and sages worshipped him. And being praised by Gandharvas, Indra went to Amarāvatī. Thus Indra became free from sins at Prāyāga. O auspicious one, you

too go to Prayāga, resorted to by gods for instant destruction of sins and certainly going to heaven.

Hearing these words of (i.e. uttered by) him along with the account and auspiciousness, then only I was confused, and saluting the feet of the brāhmaṇa, and leaving all my kinsmen and male and female servants and the house, so also all objects of senses like poisonous morsels, and, O demon, clearly noticing that the body is perishable after a moment, I went out. O best demon, being tormented in the heart with a terrible fire of falling into the ocean of hell, I went to (Prayāga) where the water is white and black, and bathed there. O old demon, listen to the greatness of that bath. Within three days the sins perished, and after the remaining twentyone days the religious merit had been (formed) due to which I obtained godhead. I enjoyed on Kailāsa as Pārvatī's dear friend. Due to the prowess, I remembered my birth also. Remembering the greatness of Prayāga, I go there in every Māgha. O demon, I have told you the entire account, which you with an amazed mind had asked, to please you. O demon, to please me (now) tell me your account. Due to which act have you become deformed and terrible, having moustache, long fangs, and eating raw flesh in the mountain-cave?

The demon said:

131b-137. A good person affectionately gives a desired thing or takes it, tells or asks a secret. O good lady, all that exists (i.e. is found) in you. O you lady of beautiful eyes, honoured by you I think the atonement (of the sins) of me, doer of cruel acts, will instantly take place. Therefore, O good lady, I shall tell you the bad act which I myself did. A man would be completely happy after reporting his grief to a good man. O beautiful lady, listen. I was formerly born in Kāśī as an excellent brāhmaṇa having (studied) many ṛks, and proficient in the Vedas, in a great and very pure family. O timid one, I received gifts, from the wicked—which act was fearful—from sinful kings, śūdras and vaiśyas also. I was prevented in many ways and many times, and was very much censured. Wicked gifts were not refused by me even from a cāṇḍāla. There was another sin

of (i.e. committed by) me of a foolish mind. There was no sinful act which I did not do.

138-150a. O you of an excellent complexion, listen to another drawback of that holy place. The sin of the size of an atom (committed) in Avimukta would attain (the size of) Meru. During that existence, I did not collect any (kind of) religious merit. Then, O beautiful lady, I died after a period of many days. Due to the power of Avimukta I did not go to hell. No sinner dying at Avimukta goes to hell. Any sin committed at Avimukta certainly becomes adamantine. Due to that adamantine sin I was born as a demon—fearful, very cruel, and sinful—on the snow mountain. Formerly I was twice born in the stock of vulture, thrice as a tiger, twice as a serpent, once as an owl, and after that as a hog. O you beautiful lady, this my birth as a demon is tenth. Of (this) my birth thousands of years have passed. O good one, I am not escaping from this ocean of misery. Here I have made (the region up to) three yojanas devoid of beings. I have destroyed many sinless beings, O you of beautiful eye-brows, due to that act my mind is constantly burning. My mind, sprinkled with the nectar of your sight, has become cool. A holy place gives its fruit after (some) time; (but) contact with the good (gives fruit) instantly. Therefore, O beautiful lady, the wise recommend the company of the good. I have told you all this affliction lurking in my mind. O you beautiful lady, a good man whose mind is not afflicted, is rare. You know what is proper here. What more should I say? I am thinking as to how I can cross over this ocean of misery. The prosperity of the good is the source of livelihood to all; does the Milky Ocean give milk to a swan (only) and not to a crane also?

Dattātreya said:

150b-163. Hearing these words of (i.e. uttered by) him, Kāñcanamālinī having her mind melted with compassion, and deciding to give (him) her religious merit, said: "O demon, I shall make atonement (for your sin). Do not be grieved. Making a firm vow, I shall try to release you. Year after year I have duly taken (bath) in the month of Māgha. O good one, (I have bathed) with faith in the holy place of Prayāga. I am unable to tell the amount of that religious merit, O demon. The wise men

have said that piety should be secretly praised. The sages, proficient in the Vedas praise giving (gifts) to the afflicted. O good one, what fruit would there be for cloud showering (water) into the ocean. O demon, I have myself experienced the fruit due to that religious merit. O friend, I shall give you that (merit) which instantly destroys sin." Then she squeezed her (wet) garment, and took the water in her lotus-like hand. She gave the old demon (her) religious merit due to (the bath in) Māgha. O king, listen, strange is the prowess due to the religious merit (of bathing) in Māgha. Having thus received her religious merit, he was free from (i.e. he got rid of) the demonish body. He became one having the body of a deity, lustrous like the sun's form. With his eyes blooming with joy, he got into a divine vehicle. He then shone in the sky, illuminating the quarters with his lustre. He, having a divine form, shone like another sun. Then he congratulated that Kāñcanamālinī: "O good one, the powerful god who gives the fruit of acts, knows that obligation done by you to me, where no acquittal was possible. Even now, kindly be pleased and favour me. O respectable lady, give me auspicious instruction, full of morals, and causing all religious acts, so that I shall not commit a sin. Hearing that I, permitted by you, shall later go to the abode of gods."

Dattātreya said:

164-177. Having heard these words full of righteousness, uttered by him, Kāñcanamālinī told him very affectionately about the religious practice, O king: "Always practise a good course. Give up harming beings. Serve good men. Kill the enemy (in the form) of passion. Quickly giving up praising and censuring the virtues and vices of others, speak the truth. Worship Viṣṇu. Go to the world of gods (i.e. heaven). Give up your longing after the body full of bones, flesh and blood. Give up the sense of mineness for your wife, sons etc. Mark ceaselessly that this world is perishable. Being firm in abstract meditation, be interested in detachment. Through love for you, I have told you the path of piety. Bear all (this) in mind. Be one of a good character. Giving up your demonish body, taking up a divine body full of lustre, quickly and happily go to heaven." Hearing

about the religious practices, the demon, being pleased, said: "Be always joyful. May you always have well-being. As long as the Moon and the Sun last, enjoy at Kailāsa in Śiva's proximity. O you of an excellent complexion, may you have Pārvatī's constant love. O mother, always be devoted to piety and penance. May you not have longing after your body. Always remove the misery of the afflicted." Speaking like this to and saluting Kāñcanamālinī, that demon, praised by many gandharvas went to heaven. Then daughters of gods, full of joy, came and showered flowers on the head of that Kāñcanamālā. The girls embraced her and spoke sweet words: "O good one, you have done a wonder freeing the demon. Due to the fear of this (demon) no one entered the forest. Now, we, being fearless, shall move here as we like." O king, hearing their words, that Kāñcanamālinī, pleased with the gift (she gave) became (i.e. regarded herself as) blessed. Kāñcanamālinī, the best daughter of a gandharva, having quickly freed him, and full of obligations, went, playing with them, to Śiva's abode.

A man who would devoutly listen to the dialogue of that excellent girl (and the demon) is never troubled by demons, and has a great liking for piety.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWENTYEIGHT

The Hymn Yogasāra in Praise af Viṣṇu

Vasiṣṭha said:

1-15. I have told you the importance of Māgha as narrated by Dattātreya. I shall now tell (you) which fruit Māgha bath has. O hero, Māgha bath is the best of all sacrifices; it gives the fruit of all gifts; it is equal to all vows and austerities. Men, due to Māgha bath (taken) with a pure mind, put the dead ancestors of both (the mother's and the father's) families in heaven, and themselves go to heaven in aeroplanes going according to the desire (of the occupants) along with ladies

of bright faces. Even those men who always commit sins, who are always engaged in bad practices, who go astray, but who bathe in Māgha and worship Viṣṇu, abandon a collection of great sins (committed) in this world. Even those men who are void of truth, who make their father and mother unhappy, who do not remain within (the limits) of the stages of life, who avoid the family practices, who are hypocrites, also get the position of the good due to the Māgha baths in this world. It is very difficult for men to get (an opportunity to have) a bath in the month of Māgha at holy places, since by that men obtain the position of the knowers of Brahman. No doubt should be raised about this. O king, in Māgha (practising) penance, (giving) gifts, muttering (hymns) and continuous worship of Viṣṇu and his temple is inexhaustible (in giving fruit). Therefore, men should strive to bathe and give garments, food and gold according to their capacity. A giver of food in Māgha drinks nectar in heaven. A giver of gold goes near Indra. A man who offers a lamp-fire, garments, is full of lustre, and always lives in the world of the Sun. Sinners are not so much purified in this world by sacrifices, good gifts, severe and bright austerities, following proper celibacy, worshipping (deities) and resorting to abstract meditation as by Māgha baths causing religious merit. Those sinners who bathe at holy places when the orb of the Sun has half come up in the month of Māgha, do not suffer from the torment of a series of miseries and the unbearable torment inflicted by Yama. Those who, after having bathed in Māgha, worship Viṣṇu, become, after falling from heaven, kings who are excellent, handsome, fortunate, sweet-speaking, righteous, very wealthy, and living for a hundred years. As a heap of pieces of wood offered into fire is reduced to ash just that moment, in the same way, due to Māgha bath the heap of great sins and a series of sins, though vile, melt away. The bath in Māgha would, like Viṣṇu existing in the heart, burn all that sin committed by men through body, speech or mind, so also the sin that is known (i.e. deliberate) or unknown. O king, when the Māgha bath is taken, the fruit of the sin (committed) inadvertently, which is being undergone, certainly perishes just at that moment. Formerly, O king, the gandharva-maidens undergoing suffering due to the

sin, were freed from that as a result of Māgha bath (taken) at the words of Lomaśa. It was wonderful.

Sūta said:

16-33. Hearing these words, the king joyfully saluted his lotus-like feet, and polite due to great faith, asked that priest: "O revered sir, tell me whence the maidens got the curse, whose children they were, what their names and ages were, how they were freed from the suffering due to the curse by Lomaśa's words, where did they bathe, and in what number?

Vasiṣṭha said:

O best king, listen to the great story full of religious merit, which is like the araṇi (i.e. the piece of wood used for kindling sacred fire) pregnant with fire and producing religious merit and fire. There was a gandharva (named) Sukhasaṅgīti. His daughter was Pramodinī. Suśīlā was Suśīla's (daughter); Susvarā that of Svaravedin; Sutārā of Candrakānta and Candrikā of Suprabha. O king, these were the excellent names of those celestial nymphs. All the five maidens were of the same age; they had, as it were, come out from the Moon, and were bright like moonlight. Their faces were (lovely) like the Moon. They had good (i.e. long) hair; their lips contained the ambrosia from the Moon. They gave delight to the eyes as moonlight to the water-lily. They were born with profuse beauty; they had charming forms; they were attractive; their pitcher-like breasts had come up (i.e. were raised) like the lotus-plants in spring. Like a creeper with fresh foliage they had charming youth spreading out. They were yellowish like gold; had golden lustre; were adorned with golden ornaments. They had put on garlands of campaka flowers; they had golden complexion; had put on good garments; they were skilled in notes of the musical scale, and scales in music, in various melodies, in beating time and amnsements, in playing upon the flute and the lute which accompanied the sound of the drums, in dances, in hobbies like drawing pictures and (other) arts. The maidens who were like this loved sporting in a grove. Fondled by their parents they moved in Kubera's abode. Once (all) the five coming together through curiosity in the month of Vaiśākha, collected mandāra flowers

from one grove and another and to propitiate Pārvatī some time went to the Acchoda lake. They took from that (lake) excellent golden lotuses along with excellent blue lotuses. Having bathed in the lake which was bright with lapis lazuli, clear like crystal and having corals, and having put on garments, they with the golden sand fashioned, observing silence, a solid image of Pārvatī with an altar. The maidens, full of devotion, honouring Pārvatī with sandal, camphor and saffron, and worshipping her (image) with excellent lotuses etc. and with various modes of worships, danced by beating time. Having resorted to the excellent note of gandhāra (i.e. the third note) with sweet sounds of strings and with good modulations, the deer-eyed sang a song, having sweet letters, charming theme, and sweet tunes due to turns.

34-50. To that excellent holy place of Acchoda which had sweet-sounds (of music), which gave sprinkling of delight and joy, Agnipa, the son of a sage, the treasure of Vedas, came to bathe when the maidens were dancing very freely. He was matchless in form; had an excellent face: his eyes were long like lotus-leaves; he was young; his chest was broad; his arms were good; he was very handsome; he had a darkish complexion. He was as it were another Cupid. That celibate, with a tuft of hair on the crown of his head, shone with his staff like Cupid with his bow. He had covered himself with deer-hide, had worn a good sacred thread, and had his girdle of muñja grass resembling gold. Seeing that brāhmaṇa, the maidens, full of curiosity, were delighted (asking themselves): 'who is this (welcome) guest to our eyes on the bank of the lake?' Leaving dancing and singing, they, pierced by Cupid with his arrows like female deer pierced with arrows by a hunter, were engrossed in looking at him. The five innocent ones, saying, with great excitement (to one another), 'See (him), see (him)' mistook that youth, the excellent brāhmaṇa, for the god of love. Again and again propitiating him (i.e. gazing on him) with their eyes like lotuses, the maidens then debated with one another: 'If he is the god of love, how would he go without Rati? Is he the (twin) deities Aśvins? But they indeed move as twins. Is he a gandharva, or a kinnara, or a siddha, taking any form at will? Or is he a son of a sage or some excellent man?

Whosoever he may be, he has been created for us by the Creator. As for the lucky ones a treasure is fashioned by (means of) their former deeds, in the same way this excellent bridegroom is brought for us—the maidens, by Pārvatī whose mind is moistened due to the flood of the large waves of the water of compassion. 'I have chosen him; you have also chosen him. As you have chosen him, so have I.' O best king, when the maidens were talking thus, he, having heard their words, performed the mid-day rites, and thought in his mind (i.e. to himself): 'This obstacle has come up. It is a wonder that gods like Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, so also the ancient sages and siddhas, powerful in abstract meditation, were easily deluded by women. Whose deer in the form of his mind, struck by the archer Cupid with the sharp arrows in the form of the eyes (i.e. glances) of women and going out from the very strong bow in the form of their creeper-like brows, does not fall? Men's morality shines, men would be afraid of people, the great strength of the mind would persist, the consideration of (their) family would be done, the maturity due to penance would persist, the maintaining of the vows of men would be done till men are not deluded by the arrows of the glances of women, with ardent passion.

51-53. Let women delude and madden the passionate ones with their charming amorous gestures. (But) by means of which qualities do these women delude and madden me, highly devoted to piety? May the passionate ones, with their hearts very much deluded, not take delight in the immodest, impure bodies of women, produced from flesh, semen, feces and urine, imagining them (to have) charm? The wise ones of pure minds have declared the contact of women to be fearful. Till they do not approach me, I will go home?'

54-67. Till the excellent maidens did not come (i.e. before they came) near him, the brāhmaṇa disappeared by means of his prowess due to Viṣṇu. Seeing that amazing act of the intelligent son of a sage, who had disappeared due to his magical power, the maidens with their eyes frightened, and afraid like female deer, and with their eyes confused and vacant, looked into the ten directions. To one another they said: "He clearly knows magic, or knows māyā, (since) though seen, he again disappe-

ared." Just then their hearts were pervaded with the fire of separation, like a very glossy, dense forest with blazing wild fire. 'O dear, giving up your practice of magic, quickly present yourself, united with our minds, and like a fly (falling) into a morsel before (it is put into the mouth), to us. Alas! why did the Creator show you to us? Why did he fashion you? Oh! we have understood it: You have been created to give (us) great torment. Is your heart cruel? Have you no mind (i.e. interest) in us? O dear, are you cunning? Are you stealing our mind? Do you have no faith in us? Are you testing us? Are you given to the art of joking? Are you proficient in trickery? Do you know the skill to enter into (other's) hearts? And do you not again know to get out of it? Are you angry with us without (our) fault? Do you know the affliction caused to others due to deception? O lord of (our) hearts, we won't now live without seeing you. And if we live, it is through the hope of seeing you again. Take us there where you have quickly gone. The Creator, depriving us of your sight has cut (our desire) just when it was a sprout. By all means appear (before us). By all means resort to pity. Good men do not at all see (i.e. do not go to) the extreme.'

68-70. Having wailed like this, and having waited for him for a long time, they quickly started moving towards home through the fear of their fathers. Bound by the chains of his love, very much afflicted due to separation from him, they somehow mustered courage and came home. All they came (home) and dropped (themselves) near fountains. They were asked by (their) mothers: "What is this? Why were you late?"

The maidens said:

71-80. As we were gladly sporting and singing with the kinnara-maidens at the lake, we were not conscious of (the particular time of) the day etc. O mothers, we were tired on the path, therefore, there is torment in our bodies. Due to great insensibility we are not able to speak.

Speaking like this the maidens rolled there on the jewelled floor. The perplexed ones concealing the expression of the face as giving a clue to their inward thoughts spoke with their mothers. Some one did not make the pet peacock dance with joy. Some other did not

teach the parrot in the cage through curiosity. Another one would not fondle the mongoose, or did not delight the sārikā. Another one, very much perplexed, did not play with cranes. They did not resort to amusements; they were not delighted at home. They did not much talk to their kinsmen. They did not play on the lute. They did not drink the juice of the flowers of desire-yielding trees, which was tasty like nectar, which was sweet, and fragrant with mandāra flowers. The maidens with their eyes fixed on the tips of their noses, remained like female devotees continuously concentrating on the Unknown and having Viṣṇu in their minds. For a moment they remained at the window, covered with the moon-stones and oozing drops of water, and at (another) moment they remained at the fountain. For a moment they arranged their beds with the petals of lotuses from the lakes. They were fanned by their friends with cold leaves of plantain trees.

81-91. Thus those excellent maidens thought one night to be equal to a yuga. Somehow they showed courage, (but) they were afflicted as if suffering from fever. Seeing the sun in the sky they thought of their life. Each one informing her own mother, they went to worship Pārvatī. Having bathed according to the rite, and having worshipped (Pārvatī) with flowers and incense as was proper, they remained there singing. In the meanwhile that brāhmaṇa also came from his hermitage to the Acchoda lake to bathe. The maidens seeing the celibate had their eyes bloomed, as the lotus plants (have the lotuses bloomed) on seeing the sun at night's end. Just then the maidens went near the celibate and bound him with the bonds of their left and right hands. "O cunning one, yesterday you had gone (i.e. you could go). You cannot go today. We have surrounded you. About this you should have no doubt." Thus addressed, the brāhmaṇa who was (caught) in the noose of their arms, laughed and said: "You are talking good, favourable, sweet words. But the vow of me staying in the first stage of life and devoted to Vedic studies in my preceptor's house, has not been completed. The wise should stick to the practice which (is prescribed) for a particular stage of life. Therefore, O maidens, I do not think that marriage would be a (proper) way (for me)." Hearing his

words, they, with a sweet but indistinct voice, like the cuckoos in spring, and with curiosity, spoke to him (these) words:

92-106: "The wise ones say that the sacred rule is fixed like this: Worldly prosperity (*Artha*) is born of righteousness (*Dharma*). From *Artha* springs *Kāma*. And the fruits of righteousness (*Dharma*) spring from sensual enjoyments (*Kāma*): That sensual enjoyment has stood before you due to the abundance of your righteousness. Enjoy it through various pleasures. This will then be heaven (only)." Hearing these words of them he spoke in a serious voice. "Your words are true; but having finished my vow in this (stage of life) and having obtained (my) preceptor's consent, I shall go through the complete rite of marriage. Not otherwise." They thus addressed, again said, "O handsome one, you are certainly ignorant. Excellent women are a divine medicine, are Brahmā's elixir, accomplishment of a treasure, excellent arts. They are a hymn, they (produce) a liking for success, and when they have approached, an intelligent man should not keep them off according to law. If an act is succeeding through (good) luck, the virtuous one does not ignore it. Since ignoring it is not fruitful, so, procrastination also is not recommended. (Only) fortunate men, and not others obtain maidens who have intense love, who are spotless due to being born in a (noble) family, whose hearts are soft with affection, who speak sweetly, who choose their grooms, who are beautiful, and whose youth is charming. What a great disparity there is between us—beautiful maidens—and this chap? I think the Creator is very clever in doing a difficult job. Therefore, do an auspicious thing now by accepting us in the gāndharva form of marriage. Otherwise we will not live." Hearing these words, the brāhmaṇa who knew well the customary observance said: "O you deer-eyed ones, how should men whose wealth is religious merit, abandon the customary observances? Righteousness, worldly prosperity, sensual enjoyment and salvation—these four (when practised) in (due) order are said to give (their) fruit. Opposite of this is fruitless. Therefore, I who have taken up a vow, would not marry at a wrong time. He who does not know the time of an act (i.e. the time when the act should be done) does not obtain its fruit. Since, O maidens, my mind is attached to religious thought, therefore, listen—I do not long after a self-choice

marriage." Having thus known his intention, and looking at one another, they left one another's hands, (and) Pramodinī seized his feet. Suśīlā and Susvarā seized his arms; Sutārā embraced him, and Candrikā kissed his face.

107-117. Yet the celibate remained uninterested; and resembling the fire at the time of the final deluge, and filled with great anger, he cursed them. "You clung to me like female imps. Therefore, you will be (i.e. turn into) female imps." Thus, they, quickly cursed by him, left him and stood (as) before. "O sinful one, what have you done this to innocent persons? Fie upon your righteousness, since you did an undesirable act when a desirable act should have been done. We have heard that the happiness of the man who bears malice against adorers that are attached and his friends, perishes in both worlds. Therefore, by our curse you too quickly become an imp." Speaking like this, those maidens, heaving sighs, smit with hunger, ceased (speaking). Then due to the anger towards one another all the maidens and that celibate became imps in that lake, O king. The female imps and the male imp, waiting ruthlessly, put an end to the fruit of the acts they had obtained formerly. O king, auspicious or inauspicious acts done before do give their fruit unavoidably even to gods, like one's (unavoidable) shadow. Their fathers and mothers, so also his (father and mother) wept there, (saying): "The children have not erred; destiny is difficult to be overcome." After that (i.e. since then), the imps, greatly pained in securing food, and running here and there, lived on the bank of the lake. When many days passed like this, Lomaśa, the best sage, came to the Acchoda lake to bathe on the fourteenth of Pauṣa.

118-128. Seeing that brāhmaṇa (i.e. Lomaśa), all the imps coming together and (thus) being in a group, and overcome with hunger, and desiring to kill him, ran (to him). Being burnt by his very bright lustre, they were unable to stand before him; and all of them remained away (from him). Just then there came the brāhmaṇa Vedanidhi. Having seen Lomaśa, O king, he saluted him touching the ground with the eight limbs of his body. Having put his folded palms on his head he spoke true and pleasant words: "O brāhmaṇa, (one) would have the company of the good, when there is (a possibility of) the dawn of good

fortune. Between the two, viz. a man who always bathes in holy places like Gaṅgā and who always keeps the company of the good the company of the good is better. O brāhmaṇa, the company of the venerable gives unseen and seen fruit on the earth. It gives (i.e. leads to) heaven; it removes diseases; but is said to be troublesome." Speaking like this, he told him the former, wonderful account. "These are gandharva-maidens. This chap is my son. O best sage, all deluded by cursing one another, stand in the form of imps with melancholy faces in front of you. By seeing you the children will be freed; does not the mass of darkness hide in a cave on sunrise?" O king, Lomaśa of great lustre, having heard it, had his mind moistened with pity and spoke to the sage, grieved for his son: "Due to my grace may the children's memory be revived at once. I am talking (words full of) virtue. The mutual curse would end."

Vedanidhi said:

129. O great sage, describe the virtuous practice due to which the children will be free. This is not time for delay, since the fire of the curse is fearful.

Lomaśa said:

130-145. Let them duly have Māgha bath with me. At the end of Māgha they will be free from the curse. Otherwise there would be no atonement. O brāhmaṇa, the fruit of the curse is sinful. The destruction of men's sin would take place by Māgha bath at a holy place. Thus I certainly think. Māgha bath, especially at a holy place, would burn all the sin committed during the seven previous existences and the present sin also. Even that sin for which the best sages do not see an expiation, would perish by the Māgha (bath) at holy places. Māgha (bath) at Mānasa produces knowledge. Due to that it gives salvation. It destroys all sins at the holy places on the Himālaya. The teachers of the Vedas have mentioned (Māgha bath) as giving (i.e. taking one to) Indra's heaven. Māgha (bath) at Badarīvana destroys all sins and gives salvation. (At a holy place on the bank) of Narmadā Māgha (bath) destroys sins and misery, fulfils all desires, gives (i.e. takes one) to Rudra's heaven and destroys sins. A Māgha bath in Yamunā would lead to the

Sun's world and destroy sins. One in Sarasvatī destroys sins and gives the fruit in the form of Brahmā's world. O best brāhmaṇa, the Māgha (bath) in the Viśālā (river) gives a large fruit. It is a wild fire to the fuel of sins, (and) destroys the effect of the cause of being conceived. A Māgha bath in Gaṅgā is said to lead to Viṣṇu's world and to salvation. Rivers like Śarayū, Gaṇḍakī, Sindhu, Candrabhāgā, Kauśikī, Tāpī, Godāvarī, Bhīmā, Payoṣṇī, Kṛṣṇaveṇikā, Kāverī, Tuṅgabhadrā and other rivers are there. A man bathing in any of them in Māgha quickly goes to heaven, after being free from sins. Māgha bath in Naimiṣa gives absorption into Viṣṇu, (and one) at Puṣkara takes a man near Brahmā. Due to (a bath) in Māgha at Kurukṣetra a man goes to Indra's world. A Māgha bath at Devahrada gives the fruit in the form of the divine powers obtained through abstract meditation. A man would be an attendant of Rudra by bathing at Prabhāsa when the Sun is in Capricorn. A man gets a divine body by bathing at Devakī in Māgha. O brāhmaṇa, by a bath in Gomatī, at Hemakūṭa, Mahākāla, Oṁkāra, Amareśvara there is no rebirth (for a man). A man is honoured in Rudra's heaven due to a bath in Māgha at Nīlakaṇṭha and at the confluence of all rivers when the Sun is in Capricorn.

146-155. By means of (such) a bath all the desires of human beings are fulfilled. O best brāhmaṇa, only the fortunate get an opportunity to bathe in Māgha at Prayāga, since the white and black water there gives freedom from rebirth. Gods dwelling in heaven always sing: 'We shall have a bath in Māgha at Prayāga, by having a bath at which place, men to do not see (i.e. experience) the pangs of (being conceived in) a womb and remain near Viṣṇu.' Those men, clothed in (i.e. full of) many sins, who bathe on a new-moon day at the holy place of Prayāga, are meritorious, do not go to hell, but gladly move like gods in an auspicious heaven. Formerly the Creator weighed the bath in Māgha at Prayāga with holy places, religious vows, gifts, austerities, and Māgha proved to be greater and therefore superior. That (highest) position which men get by bathing in Māgha, is not obtained by means of parching up their bodies through eating (i.e. subsisting on) air, water, or leaves, or through severe austerities collected over a long period, or by means of abstract

meditations. Does not a row of bees, struck by (the flappings of) the ears of elephants, adorn the doors of the houses of those who have bathed at the holy place of Prayāga at the confluence of the divine rivers (i.e. Gaṅgā with Yamunā) when the Sun rises (after entering) Capricorn? How is that Prayāga which after having easily destroyed the sins, gives greater fruit after a bath there, than the Rājasūya sacrifice or the horse-sacrifice, not resorted to by (men)? In the country of Avantī formerly there was a king (named) Vīrasena. Having come to the bank of Narmadā he performed a Rājasūya sacrifice. He duly performed sixteen horse-sacrifices adorned with golden courts, and rich in golden ornaments and tying posts. He gave heaps of grains resembling mountains to brāhmaṇas. He was liberal, a devotee of deities, a giver of cows and of gold.

156-167. There was a foolish brāhmaṇa of a mean family named Bhadraka. He was a farmer of wicked acts, and was excluded from all religious rites. He was fed up with agriculture; and his brothers had not performed any purificatory rites for him. Wandering here and there, he, being oppressed by hunger, went out (of the city). Luckily he got into (i.e. joined) a caravan, and came to Prayāga. He bathed there for three days in Māgha. Once both the king and the brāhmaṇa died. I saw that their condition was similar in the proximity of Indra. They had similar power of the form of lustre, similar group of ladies (attending upon them), similar divine vehicles, similar ornaments, a garland of pārijāta flowers, similar dance, and similar music. Such is the greatness of the holy place. How can it be described? The Māgha bath at Prayāga is said to be equal to (many) Rājasūya sacrifices, O brāhmaṇa. A man bathing in Māgha at (Prayāga), at the confluence of (Gaṅgā and Yamunā having) white and dark green water, is not reborn, (but) the performer of Rājasūyas would be reborn. Even the breezes in Māgha would touch the white and dark green water. They would not touch inauspicious things, for they indeed destroy great sins. O brāhmaṇa, what is the use of talking much in this case? O brāhmaṇa, listen for certain. Māgha would destroy the sin, the fruit of which has sprung up. In this (context) I shall tell you. Listen attentively. (Let the young celestial damsels listen to the ancient account of the liberation of the imps. Let your son also

listen to it. The imps, desiring salvation have obtained recollection through my grace.) Formerly, the brāhmaṇa Devadyuti, a devotee of Viṣṇu and master of the Vedas, with his mind flooded with kindness, liberated the imps.

Dilīpa said:

168-169. Where did he stay? Whose son was he? What was his vow? What prayers did he mutter? Due to what did he become a devotee of Viṣṇu? Which imps were liberated? O great sage, tell all this in detail; due to your grace we are hearing an interesting and very auspicious (account).

Vasiṣṭha said:

170-185. On the auspicious bank of Sarasvatī there is a holy pool called Plakṣa. His hermitage resorted to (i.e. was by) a charming mountain. (O king, the hermitage was beautiful due to) groves of good trees like śāla, tāla, tamāla, bilva, bakula, pāṭala, tintidī, ciri, bilva, mango, campaka, karañja, kovidāra, kesara eaten by elephants, tilaka, karṇikāra, kumbha, khadira, tinduka, vānīra, sālva, jambīra, pīlu, udumbara, reeds, śakota, atarupa, kārahāta and fig trees, ghoṇṭa, kūṭaja, palāśa, aśoka (trees) that removed sorrow, jambu, nimba, kadamba, kṣīrika, karamardaka, and bījapūra, nāriṅga, and adorned with rows of plantain trees, so also jack-fruit trees, and coconut trees always having tasty fruits; saptacchada, tripatra, śirīṣa, and auspicious āmalaka (trees), karkandhu, lakuca, akṣa, pāribhadra and others: ketaka, sinduvara, tagara, kunda, mallikā, white, red, blue lotus (creepers), (creepers of) mālatī and yūthikā (jasmine) mālati, mogara, jāti fruit, punnāga, kiṁśuka, barvari and tulasī-trees. O king, the hermitage was always charming due to trees of various kinds. Through the forest flows the river Sarasvatī of auspicious water. Cranes always warble there softly, sweatly and indistinctly due to ardent passion. Cuckoos coo there, and bees hum (there). O king, the forest is very noisy due to parrots and sārikās. Many wild beasts move in that best forest. The forest always has fruits and flowers, and has a dusty colour due to pollen, and is covered all round with aśoka trees. The charming forest is embraced on all sides by creepers with new foliage and sprouts that have

sprung up like a lover by his beloveds. Wind afraid of his curse blows on all sides. Clouds do not shower hail stones; the Sun does not dry up (the water). That forest is free from harm; it is inhabited by siddhas and non-siddhas; it always gave delight like the forest Caitraratha.

186-203. In that (forest) lived the pious, best brāhmaṇa, Devadyuti. The brāhmaṇa's son was Sumitra, obtained through the boon of Lakṣmī's husband. Listen to the vow of him who was always controlled. In summer he observed the vow called Pañca (-agni), and fixed his eyes on the Sun. He remained in the open space in the rainy season when the row of clouds showered; and when there was stormy wind blowing, he remained steady like the Himālaya (mountain). O brāhmaṇa, in winter he lived in a pool of Sarasvatī—in water; and during the season he sipped the pure water thrice a day. He everyday gratified his dead ancestors, deities and sages with faith. He always taught the Vedas, spoke the truth, and had curbed his senses. Resting on the (bare) ground, he, appealing to Viṣṇu, meditated on him. He offered oblations to fire with sylvan articles, and honoured guests with reverence. He always spent his time by practising Cāndrāyaṇa vow. He desired to subsist on leaves and fruits fallen on their own. He was not dejected; he was devoted to penance; he had mastered the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas. He was frightful due to his veins (very much strained), and his body had just bones (left in it). In this way he passed a thousand years in the forest. Then the mountain was blazing due to the lustre of his penance. The beings could not bear the lustre of the noble one. O brāhmaṇa, blazing with penance he shone like fire. In that forest beings were free from enmity. Deer, tigers, mice and cats, free from fear, played with one another. Listen also to another vow of him difficult to be secured. Everyday he worshipped Viṣṇu three times with a thousand fragrant flowers that had bloomed. He was very much engrossed in meditating upon Viṣṇu according to the Vedic hymns. The brāhmaṇa performed every act to please Viṣṇu. Due to a boon given to him by Dadhīci he became an excellent devotee of Viṣṇu. Once on the Ekādaśī in the month of Vaiśākha the great sage after worshipping Viṣṇu offered a charming and lovely (hymn of) praise to him. Then only Viṣṇu mounted

the bird (i.e. Garuḍa), and being very much pleased by the praise, himself came before him. Seeing him mounted on Garuḍa, with the colour of his skin like the cloud, having four arms, large eyes, decorated with all ornaments, actually standing before him, the brāhmaṇa, with horripilation appearing (on his body) and with tears of joy, with his mind satisfied, (saluted him) with his head going down to (i.e. touching) the ground.

204-216. Due to that joy he could not contain himself even in the interior of the universe. He did not remember (i.e. was not conscious of) his body. He felt, as it were, he was one with Brahman. Then Viṣṇu affectionately spoke to the sage, Viṣṇu's devotee: "O Devadyuti, I know you are my devotee. You have sought my shelter. You have given up all acts. You are devoted to me. You always have me in your mind. I am pleased with this praise. Ask for a boon." Hearing these words of Viṣṇu, the ascetic replied: "O god of gods, O you lotus-eyed one, O you who have taken up a body through your divine power, there is no more difficult boon than (being able) to see you. All gods like Brahmā, and meditating saints like Sanaka, so also siddhas like Kapila, desire to see you in person. All bonds like ego, sense of mineness, so also delusion and greed—auspicious and inauspicious, entertained with a purpose, are burnt on seeing you, the highest one. I have obtained the fruit of my existence and deeds, and the fruit of my intellect has become manifest in that, O you lord of the world, you are seen by me. What other than this should I ask for? O lord of gods, I do not have your lotus-like feet in my heart for (securing) a boon. With my mind gone (i.e. devoted) to you, I always think of you with devotion. I ask for this boon only that my devotion to you should be steady. Let it be so, O lord of Lakṣmī. I do not ask for any other boon." Hearing these words of him, Viṣṇu, with his face bright, and with his mind pleased replied: "Let it be so, O best brāhmaṇa. The other (boon is): There will be no impediment to your austerities. Those men who will recite this hymn composed by you will have a firm devotion to me. Whatever religious act they (perform) will be complete. They will have a great unswerving faith in knowledge."

217. Speaking like this, Viṣṇu, the god of gods, vanished there only. Since then Devadyuti became extremely devoted to Viṣṇu.

Dilīpa said:

218-221. O great sage, I am favoured by you. I am purified by this account like Gaṅgā in company with Viṣṇu. Tell me that hymn of (i.e. composed by) the sinless brāhmaṇa, with which Viṣṇu was pleased. I have a great curiosity (to know it). O brāhmaṇa, I think, by your favour I have obtained my desired object. To whose greatness does the company of the great not lead? Favour me and tell me the excellent hymn of Viṣṇu, due to which the lord was pleased and obliged him by his appearance.

Vasiṣṭha said:

222-261. I shall tell you the secret, excellent hymn that is muttered. It was formerly received by Garuḍa and from him it came to me. It contains the essence of metaphysics; it causes great prosperity; is auspicious. It removes all sins, and is the great cause of the knowledge about the self, O king. (The hymn is as follows:) "Oṁ, obeisance to Vāsudeva; salutation to Viśva, to Cakrin (i.e. the Disc-holder), to Kṛṣṇa to whom his devotees are dear, to Jagannātha and to Śārṅgin. One who praises, the one that is praised, the praise—when all this is Viṣṇu himself, by whom is he praised? The devotion of men pleases (him). Which praise would delight that god whose breath are the Vedas with the Vedāṅgas and the Sūtras? Due to my devotion I have become talkative. All the three worlds with the mobile and the immobile, revolve like a wheel. Therefore, O god having a disc in your hand and best weapons, are sung (your praises). (When) actually the Veda cannot describe him, or speech or mind does not know him, then how can one like me praise him, or would be his devotee? You are the first Brahman; you are Brahmā-Viṣṇu. You are the refuge of all. You are the Creator, the cause of Brahman. You yourself are pure Brahman. (O lord, which is this body of you that touches the one having a body after breaking it. Salutation to you who are not touched by blemishes of the body.) O Viṣṇu, there is no doubt that you are that thought—the mass of happiness—which keeps awake as god, and does not sleep in one's soul. The Great Principles like Mahat, so also the guṇas that give rise to modifications (of Prakṛti)—all that is you, O lord; diversity is a foolish idea.

Through the three concepts like Keśa, Keśava, you are conceived, O brahman, as a man by sons etc. The entire world having some form without faults and with particular qualities appears to the poets. That truth, that pure Viṣṇu, I praise. I salute that Brahman, knowing which, the friends of the world having no desire, perform acts prescribed by the scriptures. I praise that Viṣṇu who is just existence, free from destruction, whom the meditating saints resort to after awakening, and who exists in all beings. I praise that Viṣṇu, seeing whom equal to you the best brāhmaṇas sing (i.e. praise) 'I am Brahma', after knowing him. Salutation to him, of the nature of pure intelligence, who destroys the variety of delusions through his divine power, so also the ego and sense of mineness of men and heaps of sins. Salutation to him, of the nature of pure intelligence, by remembering whose name the heaps of men's sins instantly perish at the time of setting or not setting out, always getting into the shadow of whose lotus-like feet a man is not burnt in the worlds burning with the blazing flames of the fire of delusion. I salute that Ananta, by remembering whom there is no delusion, no misery, no diseases and griefs. The beings that sprang up from the intellect do not at all desire (any thing). People moving in one (way), knowing him see him as their soul. If the meaning of a word or of a sign has Viṣṇu as its objects, then due to that fact may not the worldly existence touch (me). If Viṣṇu, pervading the world, is highly honoured by the Vedas etc., then due to that fact may I have uninterrupted devotion to Viṣṇu. May that Viṣṇu who is not a seedless seed, who is caused by a seed, cut off with the sword of bright knowledge the seed of the worldly existence. May that Viṣṇu who becomes one having three bodies like an actor, due to the (three) constituents in acts like creation, maintenance and destruction, favour me. May that Viṣṇu who, merely for protecting righteousness, descended on the earth in ten ways, and who was requested by all gods, favour me. May that god Viṣṇu who, the pure one, lives all alone in the abode of the heart (of objects) beginning from Brahmā up to a clump of grass, favour me. In front of the gods, that god who was one and many entered the deities. May that Viṣṇu, the Creator, favour me. He is a bird in the sky in the form of the heart. He is like the sky. He is the origin of the

sky. He is beyond the sky. His acts are (infinite) like the sky. He goes to the sky. The sky is Brahmā. He enjoys the sky etc. In the end he is of the form of the sky. You enjoy the sacrifice. Due to your lustre, your joy, your illusion (Māyā) the world becomes united. You are of the form of lethargy, misery and truth also. The universe created by you delights. Forsaken by you, it would be impure. Though in contact with it, you are detached; and due to that you become changed. You are the consciousness born of combination of physical elements, whom the Cārvākas worship. The Saugatas (i.e. the Buddhists) call you a transitory idea with their logic. Those who look upon the Jina as their deity (i.e. the Jainas) look upon you as having the size of the body. The Sāṁkhyas meditate upon you, beyond the Prakṛti, as the Puruṣa. The Upaniṣads think between themselves that you alone are Brahman, free from birth etc., the ancient one, and having bliss as its characteristic. You are the (five) elements like the sky, the body, the mind, the intellect, the senses, knowledge and ignorance. There is nothing else but you. You are the Creator of all beings; you alone are my refuge. You are the fire, the oblation; you are Indra; you are the hotṛ priest; you are the hymn: you are the act and the fruit. O Viṣṇu, you are existence and non-existence; I have sought your refuge. You are the giver of the fruit of (one's) act. You are the fruit of the rite of the initiated. You are the cause of all the beings. You are my refuge. May my love take delight in you as that of the young women in the young men, and as of the young men in a young woman. The servants of Yama do not see even a sinner who has bowed to you, as the owl does not see the sun. The three torments trouble a man through masses of sins as long as he does not, with devotion, remember your lotus-like feet.

262-269. I offer obeisance to that revered Viṣṇu whom the qualities, birth, bodily characters, so also the movements of the sense do not touch; (but) whom, the sages free from the delusion of attachment, touch. Wailing like—he is gross as a means, a (gross) means in a cause, is their cause, is without means and cause, the sages enter him. Salutation to that Viṣṇu waited upon by sages. Salutation to that Viṣṇu who is waited upon by sages and who having embraced Lakṣmī in the form of happiness and salvation, that is having the charming quality like affluence, and

that is subjugated by his meditation, shampooing and shaking, sleeps here in self-pleasure. I bow to Viṣṇu in my heart, in whom of a detached nature due to the modification like being born etc., the group of the six waves (of passions) shakes, and whom the faults like Cupid (i.e. love) etc. do not torment. I salute that Viṣṇu whose pure company of his meditation removes ignorance, the world in having fallen into the fire of whose knowledge perishes, the bright sword of whose knowledge cuts off the enemy of doubt, and who is the mass of pure knowledge. Since all the mobile and immobile beings are under the control of Viṣṇu, may he due to this fact remain before me. Since Viṣṇu is the entire immobile and mobile world, may he, due to this fact, manifest his form to me. If I have the same best devotion for my preceptor as for Viṣṇu, may he, due to this fact, manifest himself (to me).

270-293. Thus thinking about (my) devotion for him, due to true oaths, Viṣṇu who was pleased, showed himself to me." Then having given him a boon, and having fulfilled his desire, Lakṣmī's lord (i.e. Viṣṇu), pleased by the brāhmaṇa with the hymn, left. The brāhmaṇa also being satisfied and highly devoted to Viṣṇu, and muttering the hymn remained in the penance grove with his disciples. A man who narrates this hymn or he who listens to it, obtains the abundant fruit of a horse-sacrifice. A brāhmaṇa always gets awakening due to his knowledge. He has no mind for (committing) a sin; he does not see anything inauspicious. By narrating this hymn all men have peace of intellect, tranquility of mind, and peace of senses also. A man who, after having pondered over the meaning, devoutly mutters this hymn, shakes off his sins in this world and gets Viṣṇu's position. He who always recites it, gets his desired objects, so also sons, grandsons, beasts, long life, strength, power. He who narrates this hymn gets that fruit which is obtained by giving a thousand pots full of sesamum, or a thousand cows. A man soon obtains, by means of this hymn, whatever he desires from among righteousness, worldly prosperity, sensual enjoyment and salvation. Men who hear this hymn have always a mind for (good) conduct, modesty, piety, knowledge, penance and morality. By reciting it (just) once a man having (committed) major or minor sins, has his mind purified instantly. It increa-

ses intellect, wealth, glory, fame, knowledge, righteousness. It pacifies evil Planets; it destroys all that is inauspicious. Brāhmaṇas should recite this hymn removing all diseases, wholesome, destroying all dangers, helping to cross misery. It should at once be recited at the time of trouble from Planets and Stars, and fear from the king and thieves, calamities from fire and thieves. (Due to the recital of this) there is no fear from lions, tigers, so also from magic, spirits, imps and so also from demons. When this hymn is recited men have no fear at all from demonesses, big miseries, and dangers. He who worshipping Viṣṇu would recite this hymn, is not contaminated by sins like a lotus-leaf by water. A man gets the same position by reciting this auspicious hymn as is obtained by baths at holy places like Gaṅgā etc. He, who recites it once, twice or thrice a day, always and in all seasons obtains inexhaustible happiness. A man reciting this hymn (just) once obtains the same fruit as is obtained by reciting thrice even the four Vedas. He who remembers Viṣṇu with devotion, obtains inexhaustible wealth, becomes dear to women and is honoured in the world. He who daily recites this hymn, is always endowed with wealth, never meets with a calamity, and is not deprived of cows. Poverty, misfortune, bad dreams, bad thoughts of the devotees who listen to this hymn, at once perish.

294-297. He who, getting up in the morning, and being pure and greatly devoted to Viṣṇu, recites this, obtains inexhaustible happiness in this and the next world. This hymn called *Yogasāra* is accompanied by divine lustre, gives delight to Viṣṇu, is auspicious, produces Viṣṇu's favour, and gives his direct vision. It is highly purifying. He who always recites it goes to the heaven of Viṣṇu. Thus I have told you the secret hymn, destroying sins. Hereafter I shall tell you about the release of the imps.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWENTYNINE

The Deliverance of the Five Gandharva Maidens and Vedanidhi's Son from Imphood

Vasiṣṭha said:

1-9. Hear as to how many imps were liberated by him in the forest. Formerly in the Drāviḍa country there was a king named Citra. (He was born) in the Soma family, was a great hero, brave and had mastered the science of weapons and missiles. He, the brave one, was always possessed of streams of elephants, horses and chariots. His treasury was full of gold and many kinds of gems. He was very rich. He, with fondness, always sported in the midst of a thousand women. Being excessively fond of women, passionate, always greedy, quick-tempered, the king did not do (i.e. obey) the pious words uttered by his ministers. He very much censured Viṣṇu, and always hated Viṣṇu's devotees: (He said:) "Who is that Viṣṇu? Where is he seen? Where does he stay? Who tells about him?" In this way, the king, deluded by destiny did not put up with Viṣṇu. He, being angry, troubled those who worshipped Viṣṇu. Remaining in the condition of the heretics he did not honour brāhmaṇas, the Vedas, Vedic rites or a vow, and did not think of giving a gift. He harassed his subjects by inflicting severe punishment immorally. He was cruel, pitiless, wicked, and averse to auspicious acts. He was fallen from (good) conduct; he hated Viṣṇu; he had fallen from (maintaining sacred) fire and from (religious) acts. The king, as it were, of the form of another Yama, ruled over his subjects.

10-14. Then after a long time the king died. But he did not receive obsequies as enjoined in the Vedic texts. The king, then, being very much troubled by the hosts of (Yama's) servants, went to Yama's world along the path full of iron nails, covered with heated sand, heated by the rays of the hot sun, having no shadow of a tree, spread over with burning charcoals, and full of flames of fire, (and was) being struck by very ferocious serpents with iron-faces and being eaten (i.e. gnawed) by wolves with fierce fangs and fierce dogs while hearing the wailing of other men who had committed sins.

15-32. O king, hear about his unbearable condition in that world. The king went in succession from one hell to another. First he went to the (hell called) Tāmisra, fearful and giving great agony. Then (he went to) Andhatāmisra, where there was constant misery. Then he went to the very fierce Mahāraurava, then to Kālasūtra, Mahānaraka. Then the king, insensible due to grief, sank into Sañjīvana, Mahāvīci, Tapana, Sampratāpana, difficult to cross. (Then) the king, with his mind burnt by pain, went to Sampāta, Kākola, Kuḍmala, Pūtimṛttika, Lohaśa, Mṛgīyantra, and Panthāna, and to the river Śālmali. Then he entered a hell, very fierce, difficult to see, and inaccessible. (Then to) Asipatravana, Lohacāraka. In this way the sinful king, having fallen into all these (hells), met with terrible torment full of pangs. Then the king, due to his proclamation of great hatred of Viṣṇu, having experienced the torment inflicted by Yama for twentyone yugas, crossed the hells, and after (proper) time, he became a great evil spirit. Being hungry, he wanders in all directions in this forest. Even on the Meru mountain he does not come across food or water. The evil spirit oppressed by grief, while wandering, entered Plakṣaprasravaṇa forest (as a result) of the future good fruit. Extremely grieved he resorted to the shade of a bibhītaka tree. He loudly and fiercely cried again and again: "Oh! I am lost. How will this unhappy existence of me who am being carried by hunger and thirst, who have sought to hurt all beings, come to an end? Who will today first give a hand to me who am plunged into this ocean of sins, having a series of billows of miseries?" Devadyuti who was studying, heard this piteous wailing of the goblin of a helpless mind. Having then come there, he saw the imp, of a fierce face, fearful, of tawny eyes and weak, with his hair raised up, of a dark body, and as it were another messenger of Yama, with his tongue lolling, with long (i.e. protruded) lips, with long shanks, and full of veins, having long toes, with his mouth parched up, with his eyes like cavities, and with his skeleton (i.e. body) dry. Then the best sage, full of curiosity, asked him:

Devadyuti said:

33-35. Who are you of a fierce form? Why do you weep fiercely? Due to what are you reduced to this condition? Tell me

what can I do for you? Beings who have entered my hermitage never experience grief. All just rejoice as in the abode of Viṣṇu. O good man, quickly tell me the cause of this misery. The wise do not delay when the (desired) object has come (near).

Vasiṣṭha said:

36. Hearing these words, the evil spirit giving up (i.e. ceasing) weaping, bowing with politeness, spoke in a melancholy voice:

The evil spirit said:

37-46. Your words have removed the torment covering my entire body, as the showering cloud removes (the heat) due to a wild fire on a mountain. O brāhmaṇa, you are seen by me due to the religious merit that I have. Those who have not collected merit, do not meet the good.

Speaking like this, he told him his former account. "I have been reduced to this condition due to great hatred for Viṣṇu. O brāhmaṇa, I entertained the most sinful hatred for that Viṣṇu, remembering whose name a dead person would go to his position. I hated him who protects the beings, who maintains piety in the three worlds, and who is the innermost soul of beings. He who gives here the fruits of acts, who is sung (i.e. praised) in all Vedas, who is worshipped with penance, was hated by me. O brāhmaṇa, that Viṣṇu who is fit to be meditated upon in the Upaniṣads by ascetics who have given up (ordinary) acts, to whom forests are dear, and who move all alone without company, was hated by me. That Viṣṇu, whom all gods like Brahmā, (all) meditating saints like Sanaka worship for salvation, was hated by me. The ancient supporter of the universe in the beginning, middle and end, who has no beginning, middle or end, was hated by me. All those good acts done by me in my former existence, were burnt by my hatred for Viṣṇu, and were reduced to ash.

47-51. If somehow I see the limit (i.e. the end) of this sin, I shall not worship any other deity except Viṣṇu Having, due to my hatred of Viṣṇu, experienced for a long time the torment (inflicted) by Yama, I have come out of the hell, and have come to (i.e. am born in) the stock of an evil spirit. Now due to which active charms am I brought to your hermitage where due to

the sun of your sight the darkness in the form of (my) misery has perished? A man is taken by his own compulsive act to that place where he obtains death, bondage, happiness, wealth or a bride. Now tell me the proper act destroying my imphood. The blessed ones do not move slowly in the act of obliging others."

Devadyuti said:

52-60. Oh, this Māyā steals the memory of gods, demons and men. Due to it a hatred, destroying piety, is produced even among gods. Which fool hates, and in what way, the great lord, the creator, protector and destroyer of the worlds, and the soul of all beings? Which man, averse to devotion for him, due to offering whom all acts are fruitful, would not meet with misery? All the four castes, always worshipping Nārāyaṇa, should practise the acts laid down by holy texts, codes of laws and practices of the good. Otherwise, without resorting to the holy texts men go to hell. Therefore, a man should abandon a deed laid down in religious texts which is opposed to the import of the Vedas. Those, deceiving childish people in this world by means of self-composed religious texts, mar the path to bliss, thus harming the world. They censure Viṣṇu, the Vedas, austerities, good brāhmaṇas; therefore, due to their following wrong religious texts, they go to hell, as this very king of the Draviḍa country, hating god Viṣṇu, the lord of gods, and the master of the world, went to hell. Therefore, one desiring religious merit, should give up hatred for especially deities and brāhmaṇas, and should abandon an act outside (i.e. not enjoined by) the Vedas.

61-71. Speaking like this, the sage told the goblin (what was) good (for him): "O good one, go to Prayāga. Think of the month of Māgha. There you will undoubtedly be free from (this) imphood. This is (what) the ancient holy text (says): 'Those bathing there go to heaven.' A man casts off there (the fruit of) his former bad acts. There is nowhere any greater expiation in the form of penance, in the form of gifts, in the form of rites than a bath at Prayāga. Know that there is no sacrifice or abstract meditation superior (to that). It is a gate to heaven and salvation that is (kept) open on the earth. There is no other axe barring Prayāga having white and

black water (of Gaṅgā and Yamunā) on the earth, which cuts off (the fetters of him) who is bound by the fetters of sin. What a great disparity there is between the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā, Viṣṇu, Sun's lustre and fire, and the poor, despicable, oblation of the grass (i.e. hay) in the form of a heap of sins of men! A man who has bathed at the confluence shines, after his sin is destroyed, like the moon in the autumn, after the mass of impurity is destroyed. I am not able to tell you the importance of Prayāga, by touching a drop of which a brāhmaṇa from Kerala got released." Hearing these words of the sage, the evil spirit was delighted at heart. Free from grief, he affectionately asked the sage: "O great sage, how was the inhabitant of the Kerala country released? Being kind to me, tell the account to me."

Devadyuti said:

72-77. O evil spirit, listen to the meritorious, auspicious tale from me who am telling it. In Kerala lived a brāhmaṇa named Vasu, a master of the Vedas. He was robbed of his wealth by his relatives; he was poor; he was abandoned by his kinsmen. Grieved due to great agony, he left his motherland. He, suffering slightly from a disease, moved from one country to another, and after a long time entered a great forest. While going to another holy place, he, being tired, and emaciated due to hunger, died due to scarcity of provisions on the Vindhya mountain and did not have (proper) funeral and obsequies. Due to that ripening of his acts he became a spirit in the cave of that mountain only and lived in the solitary forest for a long time. He was troubled by cold and heat, was without food and water, was naked, was bare-footed, and sighed and uttered (the words) 'Oh, Oh!'

78-96a. Wandering here and there that Keralite brāhmaṇa, turned into a spirit, obtained happpiness nowhere. Afflicted by grief he wailed and did not find a happy state. He experienced the fruit of his act of having never given a gift. All those who do not make offerings into fire, who do not worship Viṣṇu, who do not resort to knowledge of the self, who turn away from holy places, who do not give gold, garments, tāmbūla, gems, food, fruits, water to the distressed, are without any aim

(in life). All those who snatch away the wealth of a brāhmaṇa or another person, or of women, through force or fraud—all such rogues who deceive others, hypocrites, cheats, thieves, who subsist on fire, who are cruel to children, old persons, patients, women, and are without truthfulness, who set fire (to others' property), who administer poison, who stand as false witnesses, who practise illicit intercourse, who act as priest at vulgar sacrifices, who abandon their fathers, mothers, daughters-in-law, children, wives, who are miserly, greedy, atheists, and censurers of religious practices, who forsake their master, and abandon those who have surrendered to them in a battle, who snatch away cows and land, and who defile others' gems, who censure others, who are sinful, who reproach deities and preceptors (or elders), who are always engaged in accepting gifts at great holy places, who are engaged in deceiving others, so also those who harm beings, who accept bad gifts, are born again and again in the vile stocks of spirits, demons, imps, birds and beasts and trees. They do not get the slightest happiness in this world or in the next. Therefore, one should give up a prohibited act and perform one that is laid down (in sacred texts). One should resort to sacrifices, (giving) gifts, penance, holy places, hymns, deities, preceptors. Even all the four castes, having realised the effect of their acts in crores of stocks, difficult to cross, should constantly practise piety. The brāhmaṇa, having thus seen his condition as an evil spirit due to his sins, advised him about piety and again spoke to him. That evil spirit of the Keralite, thus living on the mountain, passed a long time, and saw a traveller on the path. He was carrying two bamboo-boxes (containing pitchers) with water, and was singing (the glory of) the chief god Viṣṇu of good fame. Seeing him the evil spirit suddenly obstructed his way. He presented himself (to him), and said: "Do not get frightened. O best pilgrim, I desire to drink water from you. If you do not give me water to drink, my life will certainly depart." Hearing these words of the evil spirit the traveller spoke through curiosity to him:

The pilgrim said:

96b-99. Who are you overcome with grief, emaciated, melancholy, naked, (remaining) with just your life left, about to

die, deformed, increasing (others') fear, having the form of a fresh smoke, fierce, of fickle eyes. You have not touched the ground with your feet. You are not having (much) flesh (in your) belly and arms.

Hearing these words of him, the evil spirit said (these) words:

The evil spirit said:

100-118. O most pious one, listen, I (shall) tell you the reason why I have become like this. I am a brāhmaṇa who never gave gifts, who am greedy, and whose acts are dirty. I always ate others' food. I ate all alone, and ate sweets. I did not give alms. I did not make any offering to guests. I did not perform the Vaiśvadeva (i.e. an offering to all gods); I never threw (i.e. kept) an oblation outside. I never quenched with water the thirst of beings that were oppressed with thirst. I, wandering over the earth, never gratified my dead ancestors. I never offered a śrāddha and did not at all worship deities. I never gave (anyone, an umbrella) a protection against rain or heat; nor any (sandals) to protect the feet. I never gave a water-vessel, or a tāmbūla, or a medicine (to anyone). I never offered a residence in my house (to anyone), nor did I show hospitality to anyone. I did not satisfy the blind, the old, the poor, the forlorn, the helpless with drink or food. I never gave a mouthful (of grass) to cows; I never gave relief to a patient. I never offered, or gave into fire (the oblation of) pure sesamum-seeds, O brāhmaṇa. On the earth, there are not givers of sesamum-seeds like me(?). At the time of a portentous calamity I did not give any gold having great fruit. I did not give (any gift) on a Saṁkrānti day and on the days of the solar or lunar eclipse. O brāhmaṇa, I passed the parvan days also void (of any gift). All the important days in Kārtika were always fruitless for me. On the Aṣṭakā[1] days or Maghā[2] days I did not offer anything to the dead ancestors. I did not bathe (at a holy place) in Māgha which gives (good) form, fortune and desired objects. When Jupiter enters Leo, I did not give anything to a brāhmaṇa learned in the Vedas on

1. Aṣṭakā—A group of three days (7th, 8th and 9th) beginning from the seventh day after the full moon.

2. Maghā—Name of the tenth lunar mansion containing five stars.

the bank of Gautamī, in my former existence. Similarly I did not bathe in Kṛṣṇaveṇī, when the Jupiter entered Virgo. I never controlled the cold of brāhmaṇas afflicted by cold, who had bathed after kindling fire with heaps of wood in Pauṣa and Māgha. I did not give cold water (to people) in months like Vaiśākha. I did not plant an aśvattha tree, nor did I rear a fig-tree. I never released beings. from a prison. I never protected one who was afflicted through fear of (other) beings and who had sought my shelter. I have not gratified Viṣṇu by fasting for three nights. O brāhmaṇa, vows like Kṛcchra, Atikṛcchra, Pārāka, and so also Cāndrāyaṇa, another vow like Taptakṛcchra, so also Sāntapana vows—all these auspicious vows were observed by gods like Indra. I did not observe them and parch up my body formerly. O best brāhmaṇa, my former existence was fruitless in this way.

119-133. O brāhmaṇa, mark the very cruel and wonderful fruits, very difficult to understand, of my former acts, (which I am having) in this existence. On this mountain there are (pieces of) flesh (of animals) killed by wolves and tigers, so also of fruits abandoned everywhere by parrots. There are good, fragrant and juicy fruits, so also soft, and roots very fit to be eaten. There are honeys of very many kinds. Everywhere there is water of streams and springs. Even though all these things are easily available on the mountain, I do not find any food (as it is) destroyed by destiny. I subsist on air, as do the serpents. O brāhmaṇa, I am alive due to the prowess of the divine stock. (Even) with power, intellect, hymns, valour, brave acts, companions and friends, a man cannot obtain the unobtainable. In this world destiny alone is the cause of acquisition or non-acquisition, pleasure or pain, marriage, death, life, enjoyment, disease or separation. The ugly, those coming from bad families, fools, those of abhorred conduct, the censured ones, those that are without bravery or valour, enjoy kingdom due to (good) fortune. The squint-eyed ones, the lame, the unworthy, the immoral, the vicious, eunuchs, are seen to be enthroned due to (good) fortune. In front of those who have given sesamum-seeds, cows, gold and garments, af air girl (in marriage), who have given (a piece of) land, a bed, seats, tāmbūla, houses, wealth, eatables, food, sandal and agaru (sandal), stand enjoy-

ments in a forest, at the top of a mountain, in a village, or even in a city, with great care. On this mountain also stay more powerful demons, so also very fierce demons, goblins and female goblins. At some time, somehow, somewhere, they, wandering in the forest, get food and drink in every forest.

134-142. Having heard this you should not be afraid of them. They are not capable of even looking at you, a pure devotee of Viṣṇu. Demons, evil spirits and demonesses neither touch nor see him whose body is protected by devotion for Viṣṇu and who depends upon Viṣṇu. Ghosts, goblins, gandharvas, female attendants of Durgā, respectable Planets, Revatīs, Vṛddharevatīs, Mukhamaṇḍīs, so also (other) Planets, Yakṣas, young Planets, cruel, wicked, old Planets, so also Mātṛgrahas, fierce Planets, other Vināyakas also, Kṛtyās, serpents, Kūṣmāṇḍa, so also other wicked beings, do not look at a pure great brāhmaṇa, Viṣṇu's devotee, O brāhmaṇa. Imps protect a pure and the most religious person, and do not trouble him. The Planets, Stars and deities always protect a pure person. On the tip of your tongue is Viṣṇu's name. In your heart remains the Veda. You are pure and devoted to giving gifts. You have fear from nowhere. O brāhmaṇa, thus I remain undergoing the fruits of my acts. Thinking and deliberating like this again and again, I do not wail. Similarly I am not pained as long as I remember the words of the crane, which I, when I was wandering, heard on the bank of the Jambālinī.

The brāhmaṇa said:

143. What kind of (i.e. which) words uttered by the crane did you hear? I desire to hear them. O evil spirit, tell them quickly.

The evil spirit said:

144-153. I shall tell you the words of the crane. O best pilgrim, listen to them. In the interior of this forest there is a river Dhūsarā by name, rising from a mountain. She is always violent due to fish, and full of intoxicated elephants, rich with the beauty of great arjuna trees, and charming with glossy jambū fruits. Roaming in the dense forest, I reached her bank. When I remained there with a desire to eat fruits, a crane,

along with a female crane, flew from another forest and came there to resort to the sand-bank with many birds. Having drunk water and sported just there with his mate, and putting the top of his head (i.e. his beak) into the cavity in his left wing, he slept. In the meanwhile was seen a monkey, getting down from the tree. His face was red. His eyes were very red. He was proud, and had strong rows of nails. He had (profuse) hair on his body, had a long tail, was quick in his movements. He speedily came there where the crane had slept. Coming (to the crane), he, with both his hands cruelly seized tightly the leg of the crane even as many birds were watching. All the birds, flew and flew and went elsewhere. The female crane remained (there) frightened and crying. The crane, with his sleep disturbed, with his eyes trembling due to fear, raised his neck quickly and saw (the monkey).

154-160. Seeing the wicked and very fierce monkey, desiring to kill him, the bird spoke to him in a sweet voice: "O monkey, why do you trouble me without any fault (of mine)? In the world, even the kings punish guilty persons. Good persons (i.e. beings) like you do not trouble harmless good birds averse to other (means of) subsistence, eating the moss in water, living in a forest, always bent upon sporting with their own mates, and avoiding others' mates. O best monkey, (beings) like you do not trouble birds free from censuring others and from wickedness, and the best servants. O monkey, quickly leave me who am fully innocent. I remember your (former) existence. But you do not know mine." Having heard these words of (i.e. uttered by) him, the quick monkey left him and remaining away quickly said to him:

The monkey said:

161. Tell me how you know my former existence. You are a bird having no knowledge, and I am an animal moving in the forest.

The crane said:

162-172. I know your (former) existence (due to my) clearly remembering your condition in your former life. In the former life you were Parvateśvara, the king of the Vindhya region. I

was the most respected priest in your family. Therefore, O best monkey, I know (the former life of) you. While protecting this land, you, without discrimination, and collecting much wealth, harassed all (your) subjects. O monkey, you were first burnt by the flames of fire due to the torment inflicted on the subjects, and then were thrown into the very fierce Kumbhīpāka. Being repeatedly burnt and being born, you, uttering fierce words, and weeping again and again, and experiencing, with your hellish body, a terrible agony due to the fire in the Kumbhīpāka passed thirty years. After you again crossed (i.e. went out of) the hell, you have obtained this existence of the monkey due to the remaining sin, due to which you now desire to kill me. Formerly through your valour you took away bananas from the grove of a brāhmaṇa without being permitted by him. Note that the ripening of that act is giving its fruit. Therefore, due to it you are still a monkey, and are now living in the forest. The undergoing (of the fruit) of a good or bad act done previously plays among (i.e. is effective on) beings. Even gods cannot pass over it. Thus I know your (former) life properly and with its cause. Not being deluded by my knowledge, I too obtained this crane's body.

The evil spirit said:

173. O brāhmaṇa, hearing this account the monkey too said to the crane: "You know (everything) properly, (then) how were you born as a bird?"

The crane said:

174-187. I shall tell you about that act due to which I met with misery and due to which I went to (i.e. was born in) the stock of a bird. Please listen to all that. To give it to many brāhmaṇas on Carmadā at the time of a solar eclipse you had laid aside (stock of) grains measuring a hundred khāris. Through my arrogance of (being your) priest and through greed, I, deceiving the brāhmaṇas, gave them a little and all (the remaining) I look (for myself). Due to the sin springing from taking the wealth (to be given) in common to the brāhmaṇas, I fell into the Kālasūtra hell, full of mire of blood, which was quite full of moving insects, having a bad odour, foamy with pus; with my

face down and licking the pus, I was plunged into it up to my navel. Similarly from above my body was being constantly eaten up by great vultures and crows, and was being cut off by insects. In that mire of blood I became breathless; and even a short time there was as much as a kalpa for me. For three myriad years I experienced the agony. O monkey, I am not able to describe that misery (I had) in the hell. Priesthood is very fearful and naturally causes sin. In it the living of a brāhmaṇa is like that of a god. Acceptance of gifts from a king is fearful. Due to it brāhmaṇas were burnt. The priest would snatch away even their wealth. Due to that he becomes a hellish (being). The wise declare that the sin which a king first physically commits, is fixed on the priest. Luckily somehow I crossed the ocean of hell. Due to luck I first reached the stock of a bird. I got this condition (i.e. existence) of a crane, as, formerly, after taking a brass-metal pot from my sister, I gave it to a gambler. And this was a very fearful brāhmaṇī, who stole brass-metal. Due to that she has become my lawful wife, the female crane.

188-201. O monkey, I have thus told you the entire fruit of (my acts). Now listen to the past, the present and the future. I shall be (born as) a swan; and you will also be (born as) a swan. This my wife, the female crane, will be (born as) a female swan. We shall live happily in the Kāmarūpa country. After that we shall go to a female devotee, (who will be) good (to us) in future. Then we shall obtain existence as humans, difficult to get, where virtue and its opposite are secured by beings. Śiva, having thus deluded all beings with his Māyā, rejoices by giving pleasures and pains not only to us but to all beings. This is the way created variously in the world, which is full of virtue and vice and the nature of its fruit is pleasure and pain. It is always or repeatedly followed by all beings, gods, demons, human beings, tigers, worms, insects and aquatic animals. Without thinking about detached meditating saints who have mastered the Upaniṣads, no one has crossed this path having thorns of misery. Maheśvara, considering the place and time gives in this world the fruit of virtuous or vicious deed of the size of an atom or a big one. Very intelligent persons, knowing the Māyā of the lord, knowing what is to be done according to the sacred

laws, do not grieve, nor are they tormented, nor are they troubled. O monkey, the effect of the former deeds cannot be changed with means or intelligence even by gods. Formerly you were born as a king, then were born as a hellish being. Now being born as a monkey, you will get an existence like that (i.e. according to your former deeds). Thinking like this, O monkey, being free from grief, and enjoying in this forest, wait for your death. I, too, bound by the Māyā of the Lord, and mustering courage, will pass my existence as a crane in forest after forest.

The monkey said:

202-203. I honoured you before. Even now I praise you. You remember (our) former existence. (Now) I know everything about our former life. O crane, live with the female crane. May you always have well-being. I whose illusion has gone due to your words, will (now) always move.

The evil spirit said:

204-216. O brāhmaṇa, when, on the bank of the river I heard this charming, wonderful, highly purifying dialogue between the bird (i.e. the crane) and the monkey, I too was enlightened, and due to that my grief disappeared. Seeing the very wonderful greatness of the water of Gaṅgā, I, O best brāhmaṇa, now ask you for the water of Gaṅgā. I desire to be emancipated from this state of the evil spirit. I am oppressed with severe thirst. O brāhmaṇa, on this mountain only I saw a great wonder of the water of Gaṅgā. (Therefore,) I desire to drink that water. A brāhmaṇa, born on Pāriyātra, acted as priest at the village-sacrifices. Due to acting as a priest at the sacrifices of those who were incompetent to offer sacrifices, he was born as a brahmarākṣasa on Vindhya. Due to his desire for my company, he stayed there for eight years. O best brāhmaṇa, his good son collected his bones (after burning his corpse). Bringing them to the pure holy place of Kanakhala, he cast them into Gaṅgā. That moment only he became free from the very fierce demonhood. Thus, I actually saw the wonderful greatness of a bath in Gaṅgā. Therefore, I asked (you) for this water of Gaṅgā. Since, formerly I procured many possessions at the holy place, and did not counteract (the

effect of) them in the form of muttering (of hymns) etc., therefore, I, of the form of an evil spirit am not getting water and food easily. On this Vindhya mountain a thousand years have thus passed. Giving up great shame (i.e. being very shameless), I have told you everything. O most religious one, now quickly gratify my life being in the throat (i.e. about to depart), by giving me water. In this world life even in the condition of an evil spirit is difficult to be obtained by beings. By all means men should always protect their body. Even those suffering from leprosy etc. do not desire to abandon their bodies.

Devadyuti said:

217-227. Hearing these words of (i.e. uttered by) him, the pilgrim was much amazed, and feeling compassion for the evil spirit, thought: 'In the world the fruit of sin or religious merit is actually seen as birth as a god, a demon, a man, a lower animal, an insect or a worm—thus birth in many stocks and being troubled by many diseases. So also death of children or old persons, blindness and hunch-backedness. So also affluence, poverty, wisdom, folly. These affects take place. How can they be otherwise? Those who in their place of work give to worthy recipients money earned through just ways, and (thus) accomplish their own well-being, are blessed. Land, gems, gold, cows, grains, a house, elephants, chariots, horses, garments, villages, ready food, fruits, water, so also one's daughter, a divine medicine, food, umbrella, sandals, an excellent seat, a bed, a tāmbūla, flowers, a fan, excellent seat—all this should be given by those desiring to win the three worlds. What is given is received in heaven; what is given is alone enjoyed. Umbrellas, chowries, vehicles, excellent horses, excellent elephants, mansions, excellent beds, cows, buffaloes, and excellent women, food, ornaments, pearls, sons, maid-servants, a noble family, (long) life, (good) health, affluence, skill in arts and lores—all this is obtained by men on the earth as the fruit of giving (gifts) only. Therefore give carefully. That which is not given does not stand by one.'

228-239. This verse was sung by the most religious traveller. Hearing thus, the evil spirit, with his mind afflicted, spoke again: "O traveller, I think you are almost like one coversant

with Dharma. There is no doubt about it. Give me jīvana (life/water) as the cloud (gives) water to a cātaka. Do not much delay in giving me the gift of my life." Then the traveller replied in words pregnant with justice. "O evil spirit, listen. My parents stay at Bhṛgukṣetra. For them I have brought the water from (Prayāga) the lord of holy places. (But now) in the middle (i.e. on my way) you have asked for that white and black water (i.e. from Prayāga). I do not know whether any doubt on my part for a religious act is proper now. For the strength or weakness (of this act) I shall do (i.e. follow) the great order from the Vedas and the religious texts. (I will) not (do anything) through pride only. The sages and deities have looked upon the protection of the life of beings as superior to all the sacrifices like the horse-sacrifice. Thus giving you that excellent water and protecting you, the evil spirit, I shall again bring the purifying water and take it (to my parents). This appears to me to be a powerful act giving me religious merit. The wise have said that all else except obliging others is inferior. Men, obliging others, have gladly offered even their (own) life. By giving water there would be an obligation. Then what is not gained by me? This verse, formerly sung by Dadhīci is heard (i.e. well-known) on the earth: 'Benevolence even with (i.e. at the cost of one's) life or wealth, which is full of all piety and is its essence, is approved by all those who are conversant with Dharma. The religious merit due to obliging others is equivalent to hundreds of sacrifices'."

240-249. Speaking like this, that excellent, most religious brāhmaṇa gave to the evil spirit, the water (from the confluence of) Gaṅgā and Yamunā for the protection of his life. The evil spirit drank the water and sprinkled his head with it. That moment only he abandoned his body of evil spirit, and became one with a divine body. Seeing that great wonder, the Keralite said: "Oh, due to the drops of the water from Veṇī (i.e. Triveṇī), I am freed from the condition of an evil spirit. I think even Brahmā cannot describe the merit of the water. Otherwise, why does Śiva have the water of Gaṅgā on his head? He who would drink the water of Gaṅgā as much as the size of a sesamum (i.e. even a small drop), whose power is inconceivable, would be a god or a siddha. He would not enter the womb (i.e. would not be born

again). There is no accomplishment like Gaṅgā, no knowledge like Gaṅgā, no salvation like Gaṅgā, since Gaṅgā is superior to all. Therefore, O religious one, final beatitude is in the hand of him who, with all efforts and great devotion, always resorts to Gaṅgā. O traveller, live long, do not desist from piety. By giving me a drop of the water of Gaṅgā, you have instantly emancipated me." Saying so, that evil spirit from Kerala, after having congratulated that excellent brother, the traveller, with blessings, proceeded to hevaen. That traveller also again brought the water, and bringing to his mind the wonder (caused by) the water from the holy place, went the same way (as he had come).

Vasiṣṭha said:

250-258. Thus hearing the greatness of Prayāga and saluting the sage, the evil spirit at once and quickly went to Prayāga in Māgha. O best brāhmaṇa, that evil spirit too, having bathed at Prayāga in the month of Māgha, and with his sins destroyed, gave up that body of the evil spirit. Then that Draviḍa king, being one with a divine body, devoutly praising god Viṣṇu, and free from blemishes, being praised by gandharvas, being honoured by divine ladies, went in an excellent aeroplane, to the city of Indra. O brāhmaṇa, I have thus told you, the former, wonderful historical account which instantly destroys sins. You have thus heard (the account) giving knowledge, giving salvation, and destroying misery. I have thus told you the wonderful old account; O best brāhmaṇa, you have heard the old account destroying misery. Now, with me these girls, this your son, and you—all desiring felicity, should come to Prayāga. There we shall have the Māgha bath difficult to be had even by gods. There they will instantly give up their goblinhood caused by sin.

Śiva said:

259-286. Having thus gladly drunk the sweet juice of the story from the lotus-like mouth of Vasiṣṭha, all were much delighted, and they crossed the ocean of hell. Being delighted they proceeded with him in the sky. O Dilīpa, hear all (about) that holy place Sitāsita (i.e. Prayāga). They who were irresistible, having secured their desired object, quickly came

there, and that time they were happy in their heart. Then Lomaśa kindly said in the courtyard of the sky: "Let all see this lord of holy places on the earth. All beings are freed at this Prayāga, (even) without knowledge. The Creator, desiring to create, performed a sacrifice here only. (Then) he obtained the power to create and then created (the universe). Viṣṇu, desiring a wife, bathed here at Prayāga. Therefore, he obtained Lakṣmī as his wife at the time of churning (out) the nectar here (only). Having lived here for six months, and having bathed at Veṇī at will, the Trident-holder killed with three arrows Tripura. These three ponds are blazing with perpetual fires. This fire is satisfied, and is nourished with even water. Here the thirtythree gods, being contented, were much delighted. Śiva, Nīlakaṇṭha, Kapālabhṛt (literally, holder of a skull), the chap served constantly by gods, came here (to offer) a handful (of water). This is that Viṣṇu, of the form of abstract meditation, in whose fit mouth, the son of Mṛkaṇḍa, having entered when the world was full of flames, stayed. This is that Śiva's Bhāgīrathī which removes all misery, For perfection she is served by siddhas, and gives enjoyment and salvation. She who always gives bliss, is excellent on the path to heaven. This is that river Bhāgīrathī, the goddess, that is the cause of (i.e. that leads one to) heaven. This is that river Yamunā herself, by merely bathing in whose water, beings obtain the same world as that of the Sun. O sage, the confluence of these two auspicious rivers gives happiness. Those who have bathed here, being sanctified by knowledge, are not roasted in hell. All beings, (even) without (having) knowledge, are liberated at this Prayāga. O brāhmaṇa, listen to another old historical account which destroys all sins and diseases of the listeners. Formerly a gandharva, cursed by Ṛcīka, became a crow. He at once got rid of the curse when he bathed here, that is at Prayāga only. Due to Indra's curse the celestial nymph Urvaśī dropped from heaven. She, desiring (to go to) heaven, bathed (here) and soon obtained heaven. O sage, Nahuṣa's son Yayāti obtained a propitious son after he, longing for a son, bathed at Prayāga having the holy white and black water (of Gaṅgā and Yamunā). O best brāhmaṇa, formerly Indra, longing for wealth bathed well here. Through deceit he snatched all the treasures of Kubera. Kaśyapa intent on propitiating Śiva, practised penance

here. At this holy place Bharadvāja obtained perfection in abstract meditation. O brāhmaṇa, formerly at this holy place, Sanaka and others, masters of abstract meditation and of tranquil minds, obtained the fruit—the object of their abstract meditation. Those who have bathed here at the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā in (the month of) Māgha, have become of the form of Stars and have pervaded the entire world. Those desiring (some objects) obtain their desired objects, and those desiring salvation obtain salvation. Those desiring perfection obtain it at Prayāga, O best brāhmaṇa. Now these maidens and your son long for salvation. On my word let all of them bathe here at Prayāga. Due to the efficacy of the water of the Veṇī (i.e. the confluence of Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī), may they obtain the entire wealth, the great fruit of the curse received by them*." Hearing these super-sensible**, true and unsurpassable words of the sage all they, with eager minds, were ready to bathe. Having reached Prayāga, difficult to get, they, in a moment, gave up their goblinhood.

287-289a. Freed from the agony of the curse, they obtained their respective bodies. Vedanidhi, seeing his son and those girls of divine forms, and with his mind pleased, affectionately praised Lomaśa. "Due to your favour only, this great ocean of sin has been crossed. O best sage, now speak what is proper for (these) children."

Lomaśa said:

289b-298. This young boy has studied the Vedas and has completed his vow. Let him accept the lotus-like hand of these, full of love (for him).

Then by Lomaśa's words and those of his father, that pious celibate had the auspicious rite performed by the sages with auspicious articles and hymns. According to the religious rule he accepted the hand of all the five girls. All the girls were then delighted and had their desires satisfied. The boy also was pleased. That sage Lomaśa, having granted them permission, and being saluted by them, went to his hermitage, the Meru mountain, resorted to by gods. Then, O king, Vedanidhi, taking with him his five daughters-

*प्राप्तशापमहाफलां (?) **अतीन्द्रिय (?)

in-law and his son, and being delighted, went to Kubera's city. O best king, due to the religious merit arising from the bath in Māgha at the lord of holy places, Prayāga, and due to the words of the excellent sage, the five gandharva girls got free from all sins, and due to having got the desired object had their desires fulfilled. He who everyday listens to this great historical account, which is purifying, which has become an object of veneration, which is the cause of the destruction of sins, becomes complete with all desired objects, and being rare and endowed with religious merit goes to the world of gods. He who, having heard this historical account, would honour the reader with cows, gold, garments,—since the reader is like Brahmā—(obtains religious merit). Since the reader is honoured, Viṣṇu is worshipped; therefore, a man who would desire his worldly existence to be fruitful, should everyday honour him.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTY

Kinds of Devotion to Viṣṇu

Pārvatī said:

1-2. O lord, I have heard about the greatness of Kārtika, so also of Māgha. Now I desire to hear about the best act, giving salvation. O mighty lord of the universe, tell me what is called the best devotion, by merely knowing which men would obtain happiness.

Mahādeva said:

3-19. A man should have his heart merged in Him. That devotion is said to be the greatest. He should also be given to practising compassion. He should always be intent upon duties sacred to Viṣṇu. He should subsist on fruits, roots and water. He should have the marks of a conch, a disc (on his body). He should worship Viṣṇu three times a said. That is supposed to be virtuous devotion. Virtuous (*sāttvikī*) devotion is said to be the best. The passionate (*rājasī*) one is said to be intermediate.

The vicious (*tāmasī*) one is said to be the lowest. (Thus) devotion is said to be of three kinds. Those who desire the fruit of salvation should have (devotion) for Viṣṇu. That devotion which people have through egotism, hypocrisy or deceit is declared to be vicious. So also that devotion for the god which is had for the destruction of another (person), or with hypocrisy in mind, is declared to be vicious. That separate (i.e. another type of) devotion in which a man would worship me at the beginning of an act of worship with the aim of (getting) objects of senses, glory or affluence is passionate. Brāhmṇas intent on knowledge should practise virtuous devotion which is said to consist in the sense of dedicating oneself to Viṣṇu. Therefore, O goddess, Viṣṇu is always to be served. Vice is earned through vicious devotion, passion through passionate (devotion), and through virtuous (devotion) virtue is secured. A brāhmaṇa engaged in Vedic studies, wealthy, free from attachment and hatred, having (the marks of) a conch and a disc (on his person) is always said to be pure. He who is engaged in ceremonial acts and sacrificial rites, who always censures Viṣṇu and his devotees is said to be a great cāṇḍāla. O chief goddess, those who are always engaged in Vedic studies, who are always acting as priests at sacrifices, who are always engaged in maintaining the holy fire, who are averse to Vaiṣṇava religion, are out of (the fold of) the Vedas. The wise, being pleased cause tranquillity in those men, the grandsire etc. bring about happiness, and the best sages give well-being to those men who have devotion for Viṣṇu. Auspicious Planets and evil spirits and goblins, hosts of gods like Brahmā are pleased, and Lakṣmī is steady in the houses of those men who have devotion for Viṣṇu. Holy places like Gaṅgā, Gayā, Naimiṣa, Puṣkara, Kāśī, Prayāga, Kuru, Jāṅgala, live devoutly in the bodies of those men who have devotion for Viṣṇu. Thus a wise man should everyday worship the lord with Lakṣmī; and should thus be blessed everyday. He is undoubtedly a brāhmaṇa. The man—a kṣatriya, a vaiśya or a śūdra—devoted especially to the best god, goes to (i.e. secures) salvation.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTYONE

Worship of the Śālagrāma Stone

Pārvatī said:

1-2. There are the pure images of the Śālagrāma stone on the earth. In how many ways is the worship of those image said to be done? Tell (me), O lord of gods, how many (images) are to be worshipped by brāhmaṇas? (How many) by kṣatriyas? How are they to be worshipped by vaiśyas, śūdras and women?

Mahādeva said:

3-18. The Śālagrama stone is auspicious, pure and leads to religious merit; even by seeing it a man, (even if he is a) killer of a brāhmaṇa, is purified. That house where this auspicious image of the Śālagrāma stone exists, is said to be the best of all by all holy texts. Brāhmaṇas should worship five, kṣatriyas four, similarly vaiśyas should worship three, or one with care. A śūdra would obtain salvation just by seeing it. O goddess, those men who worship the (Śālagrāma) according to this rite, enjoy all pleasures and go to the eternal (position) of Viṣṇu. This is the great image which always removes sins. For, O goddess, the fruit beginning with Kailāsa is produced by worshipping (it). Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Godāvarī, Sarasvatī are there where the stone is. There is no doubt about this. O beautiful lady, what is the use of repeatedly saying much? Men, desiring salvation, should properly worship it. A man is purified by seeing them who, O chief goddess, worship Viṣṇu devoutly. O chief goddess, Brahmā and others are not aware of the religious merit of the śūdras who as their servants, worship them well. Twentyone (generations of) the family of those brāhmaṇas who devoutly worship Viṣṇu are emancipated in those existences. The brāhmaṇa having marks of a conch and a disc (on his person), who would worship (Viṣṇu), has, by means of having worshipped Viṣṇu, worshipped the entire world. The dead ancestors speak with one another: 'Viṣṇu's devotees are born in our family. Till the final deluge they have emancipated that family. They will, after emancipating us, take us to Viṣṇu's abode. That day alone is lucky. The mother is blessed. The relatives are blessed. So also

his father is blessed, and his relatives also.' All intent upon Viṣṇu's devotion should be known to be most lucky. Merely by seeing them one gets freed from a major sin. By seeing Viṣṇu's devotees, all minor sins, so also all major sins perish.

19-29. Those men who are Viṣṇu's devotees, shine on the earth like fires and are freed from all sins like the moon from clouds. All the sins, deliberate, non-deliberate, small, big, committed through speech, mind, (physical) act, perish on seeing Viṣṇu's devotees. On seeing a devotee of Viṣṇu all the sin due to having done harm (to others) knowingly or unknowingly, perishes. On just seeing the good the sinless go to heaven; the most sinful become purified. I have told you the truth. A devotee of Viṣṇu, skilled in washing the smearing of the mud of the mundane existence, is undoubtedly the purifier of the purifiers. Those devotees of Viṣṇu who everyday remember Viṣṇu, should be known to be full of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is undoubtedly there (i.e. in them). Those brāhmaṇas who meditate upon Viṣṇu as dark like a fresh cloud, having long (i.e. big) lotus-like eyes, holding a conch, a disc, a mace, a lotus, covered with a yellow garment, shining with the Kaustubha, wearing a garland of wood-flowers, with the lustre of his ear-ring being brightened up by the grace of the face, adorned with a crown and bracelets, armlets and anklets, with his lotus-like face pleased, endowed with the grace of four arms (i.e. with four graceful arms), are of the form of Viṣṇu. There is no doubt about it, O Pārvatī. One certainly obtains Vaikuṇṭha by just seeing them, being devoted to them, feeding them or honouring them, O chief goddess.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTYTWO

Remembering Viṣṇu

Pārvatī said:

1. (Tell me) how is Ananta Vāsudeva (i.e. Viṣṇu) remembered, hearing which there would be no delusion produced in human beings?

Mahādeva said:

2-23. O chief goddess, human beings always remember Viṣṇu on realising the truth. I remember Viṣṇu, as one oppressed with thirst (thinks of) water. Gods and others remember Viṣṇu in the same way as the world distressed with cold remembers (i.e. thinks of) fire. They remember Viṣṇu, the lord of the world, the lord of the master of the universe, as a loyal wife always remembers her husband. I remember Viṣṇu, as one afflicted with fear remembers a refuge, a greedy person thinks of wealth, or one longing for a son thinks of a son. I remember Viṣṇu, as one away (from one's house) remembers one's house, as cātaka thinks of spring, as theologians think of the knowledge of the supreme spirit. Swans long for the Mānasa (lake), sages for the recollection of Viṣṇu, devotees for devotion. In the same way I remember Viṣṇu. The body where the soul exists is dear to the beings. Those that live long for a (long) life. In the same way I remember Viṣṇu. As bees remember a flower, cakravākas the sun, those loving the soul think of devotion, so I remember Viṣṇu. As people distressed with darkness long for a lamp, in the same way men long for the recollection of Viṣṇu. As those afflicted with exertion think of rest, as the addicted ones think of sleep, as those free from laziness think of knowledge, so I remember Viṣṇu. Those who are afraid of sins should remember Viṣṇu, as the elephants think of a mountainous region, or the lions of a forest or elephants. As fire is produced in the sun-stone due to contact with (the rays of) the sun, in the same way devotion is produced (in the minds of men) for Viṣṇu by the contact of good people. As the moon-stone would resort to (i.e. give out) water by the contact (of the rays) of the moon, in the same way eternal release takes place by the contact of a devotee of Viṣṇu. As the lotus-plant on seeing the moon has its flowers bloomed, similarly, devotion entertained for the good always gives salvation to men. As a frightened bee would remember a lotus, and would, due to that recollection, have identity of form with it, as the cowherdesses remembered Viṣṇu (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) as their paramour and they were absorbed (by him), so I remember Viṣṇu. Those who think of Viṣṇu with a wicked mind, with

a deceitful mind, with greedy thoughts, without any desire, with devotion, affection or hatred, those who remember him as their lord, those who remember him deliberately or non-deliberately with whatever feeling enjoy happiness in this world and go to the eternal (position) of Viṣṇu. Oh, the greatness of Viṣṇu is wonderful and thrilling. Even his recollection by chance gives salvation in three ways (i.e. *sālokya* etc.). Not by abundant wealth, nor by great knowledge, is he seen as he is seen through devotion alone in a moment. Though near he stands away as collyrium in the eyes. The ancient one would be seen by his devotees through devotion (alone).

24-44. A man deluded by the lord's Māyā thinks as: 'This is the truth, this is the truth'. When the truth of devotion is obtained, then the (entire) world becomes full of Viṣṇu. O beautiful one, for getting happiness Indra and others secured nectar; but without devotion for Viṣṇu, they were unhappy. Having obtained the nectar in the form of devotion, no unhappiness comes again. Obtaining the position called Vaikuṇṭha he rejoices there in the vicinity of Viṣṇu. As the swan abandons water and always drinks milk (only), in the same way one should, abandoning (other) practices, resort to devotion for Viṣṇu. Giving up devotion for (any) other (deity) one should resort to devotion for Viṣṇu. How would one succeed in binding (i.e. putting) water with (i.e. in) a (piece of) cloth? That stage of life passed without devotion after having obtained the (human) body is in vain. Those men who advise (people) about religious practices without devotion for Viṣṇu, always fall into a fearful hell. There is no doubt about it. As a fool desires to cross (i.e. swim over) the ocean with his arms, so a (foolish) man desires to cross the ocean of the mundane existence without devotion for Viṣṇu. Even if they (i.e. Viṣṇu's devotees) are thrown down due to (the effect of) their deeds, they preserve devotion for Viṣṇu. As a penniless person, full of longing, desires (to get) the Meru (mountain), in the same way, O god, I long for devotion for you, since that devotion of me in the other (i.e. previous) existence, causes it. As in this world even a small fire burns various forests, so the devotion of the size of an atom which I have (i.e. resorted to will destroy my sins). Hundreds hear about devotion. Thousands understand it. But, O goddess, among them, only

one becomes a devotee. Various people will give (i.e. instruct) people (in) devotion. But a man himself practising it is seen to be one among crores. Worship laughs at devotion; success ridicules devotion. He who has such a (strong) feeling for the lord of gods alone takes (to) devotion. As from a fall into the ocean and entering into a tank there is a protection, similarly one takes to devotion according to his thoughts. The leaves of a tree sprinkled at its root are seen on the branches. O goddess, the fruit later proceeds by resorting to (Viṣṇu) only. As one who carries water fixes his mind (i.e. attention) on the pot (containing the water), similarly one should fix his mind on Viṣṇu and get salvation. In his childhood his mother gives (a child) a little jaggery. But the child, through greed, again asks for (more) jaggery. Due to Viṣṇu's grace they do not notice the difference as when water is put into water, milk into milk, or ghee into ghee. As the sun is everywhere, or the fire is everywhere, similarly one remaining in devotion, is never troubled by (fruits of his) acts(?). Ajāmila, giving up his duty and practising sin, certainly got salvation on remembering his son (called) Nārāyaṇa. All those devotees who, day and night, subsist on (Viṣṇu's) name only, live in Vaikuṇṭha. In this case, the Vedas are the anthority.

45-64. The fruit of the sacrifices like the horse-sacrifice is seen in heaven. Enjoying all that fruit they fall (from heaven). Similarly the devotees of Viṣṇu enjoy many pleasures. Having reached Vaikuṇṭha when will they return (to the earth)? He who is devoted to Viṣṇu, lives in Viṣṇu's heaven. See the example, O goddess. Due to devotion to Viṣṇu, he made hundreds of stones float on the water. The mind of Viṣṇu's devotee is the moonstone without water. A frog lives in water; a bee lives in a grove and perceives the fragrance of a lotus-plant. In the same way Viṣṇu's devotee lives in his devotion. Some live on the bank of Gaṅgā. Some (at a distance of) a hundred yojanas. One gets the fruit due to Gaṅgā; the other devotion for Viṣṇu. Those that have turned away their faces from Viṣṇu are like the camel that always carries the camphor and agaru (sandal) but does not know their fragrance. Those that are averse to Viṣṇu are like the deer that smell a tree, when they desire a fragrance, but do not notice the musk in their navels. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, as (giving) advices to fools is useless, similarly advice

to one averse to Viṣṇu-devotion is in vain. Water drunk by a serpent becomes poison. Similarly devotion to Viṣṇu for devotees of other deities is poison. Those who are near a lamp or a mirror do not see it without sight, similarly those averse to Viṣṇu (do not see him). As fire is covered by smoke, a mirror by dirt, an embryo by amnion, similarly Kṛṣṇa is covered in (i.e. by) the body. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, as ghee always remains in milk, oil in a sesamum-seed, similarly Viṣṇu exists in the mobile and the immobile (objects). As many gems are held (together) by a thread, similarly the universe including Brahmā and others is woven in Brahman of the form of intelligence. As fire existing in wood is seen after friction only, similarly omnipresent Viṣṇu is seen by means of meditation only. At first there is one lamp. Then thousands are produced (i.e. lighted) from it. Similarly one Viṣṇu alone exists after having pervaded everything. A flash always remains in water at sunrise, and is seen in various ways in the pond. That Viṣṇu is like that in the world. Wind even in its natural state always carries various fragrances. Similarly the god, dwelling in all beings, enjoys the constituents of Prakṛti. As sugar due to its contact with water, turns into water, similarly the soul, being like them (i.e. the acts) enjoys the fruits of his acts. The earth, due to its contact with water, has many trees. Similarly (the soul) due to the contact with Prakṛti's constituents, is born in many stocks.

65-75. He, the steady one, lives in (the body of) an elephant or a gnat, a deity or a human being and is neither superior (in one) nor inferior (in another). As the moon is noticed in water, in the same way he is seen in all those beginning with Brahmā to a clump of grass, men, gods, sacrifices, and serpents that are there on the earth. He that is seen is existence, intelligence, bliss and Śiva (auspicious). He is the great lord. He is also said to be Viṣṇu. He is omnipresent Hari (i.e. Viṣṇu). He is known from the Upaniṣads; he is the master of all; he is beyond time; and is sound. O goddess, he who knows him to be like this is undoubtedly (his) devotee. Though one, he should be known to be many; and though many, to be one. Due to his various names and forms he is said to be many on the earth. The sun's lustre does not grow due to the eyes, but the sight

grows due to the sun. The supreme soul (as the individual soul) is always present in every body, as in every jar there is space. (And even) when the jar is broken, it (still) exists. In every form he is like that (i.e. has that form); and when it (i.e. the form) is broken, he remains very stable. As a form made of wood drops (down) without a master, in the same way the body, having differences like an insect, falls without the soul. The various kinds (of forms) of gold, become as before (i.e. gold) due to (being heated by) fire. In the same way the devotees attain the former form. Fools see (i.e. think) the sun to be lustreless due to being screened by a cloud. In the same way fools of ignorant minds do not know that lord who is described by the Upaniṣads as not admitting an alternative and as formless.

76-90. In accordance with his will he becomes one having a form, from his (condition of being) formless. From him ether without sound and quality is produced. Air was produced from ether. Then it had a sound. From air sprang up light, and from light water was produced. In that water was Virāṭ, having a universal form and of a bright interior. In the lotus of his navel there were crores of universes. From it (arose) Prakṛti (and) Puruṣa and then the world of three kinds was produced. From the union of the two arose the combination of the elements. The product of Viṣṇu in *sāttvika*. Brahmā is said to be endowed with the quality of *rajas*. Śiva is said to be endowed with the quality of *tamas*. They have urged all this. In the world there is one condition called Brāhmī (i.e. of Brahmā) due to the seed of the act (of a being). Viṣṇu completely withdraws the world due to it. This immutable lord Viṣṇu then remains there. Thus Viṣṇu is present everywhere – in the beginning, middle and end. People determined by (the effects of) their acts do not know (the truth) due to ignorance. He would cause (people) to do the acts that are proper for the castes at (different) times. That act which is intended for god Viṣṇu is not the cause of (i.e. does not lead to) conception (i.e. birth). This is always thought over by all the sages in the Upaniṣads and holy texts. This knowledge of Brahman is in the body. I shall tell it. Mind alone is the cause and effect of good and bad (acts). Everything is purified by mind. Then it is the ancient Brahman. Mind alone is always

the kinsman and the foe (also). Some are emancipated by mind; some are troubled by mind. Everything is renounced in it, but they have done acts outwardly. Acts when done in this fashion alone, do not taint (the doer), as a lotus-leaf is not tainted by even drops of water, (or) as fire when put into (another) fire. What is the use of devotion? When the flavour of devotion is known, then salvation is not liked. By means of the Yoga of eight kinds[1] Viṣṇu is not reached in this existence. Viṣṇu is reached by devotion and would always be easily accessible.

91-100. Knowledge is obtained through the Upaniṣads. That which is to be known is obtained by means of knowledge. When that which is to be known is obtained, then the world is a void. Viṣṇu is reached through (mental) power. What is the use of the eightfold Yoga? Of all dispositions purity of disposition is commended. When the beloved is embraced by one, one gets the effect as is one's disposition. One having sandals on one's feet feels the earth to be full of hide. One looks upon the world as one's mind is. The nimba tree, though sprinkled with milk, would not give up its bitterness. Beings go to (i.e. behave in conformity with) their nature. Advice is useless. How would one obtain the fruits and the leaves of the (mango) tree after having cut it off? Why should one pass one's life with a desire for the pleasures of senses? As medicine is cooked in a pan of lapis lazuli and then the drug is burnt, in the same way, how would the existence be in vain? How would a good man, after putting the treasure in his house, do service? How would one rejoice on another path (by) leaving the lord of Vaikuṇṭha (i.e. Viṣṇu)? What is the use of the recital of the Vedas by those who are without devotion? A cāṇḍāla having devotion is worshipped even by gods. What is the use of mirrors for him who has put on a bracelet on his hand? The servants (i.e. the devotees) to whom affluence is given by gods like Brahmā, Rudra, do not take anything that is offered to the lord.

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1. Aṣṭavidha Yoga—The eightfold means of Yoga consists of the disciplines of: (1) restraint (yama); (2) culture or cultivating good habits like purification of the body, contentment etc; (3) posture (āsana); (4) breath-control (prāṇāyāma); (5) withdrawl of the senses (pratyāhara); (6) attention (dhāraṇā); (7) meditation (dhyāna); and (8) concentration (samādhi).

101-109. It is better to give to a devotee who is poor. How can there be meditation on Kṛṣṇa having no body? Many (devotees) seeing him of a form, have, through devotion, gone to his position. How can worship or devotion be possible in the case of one that is non-existent? The wise ones recommend (worship and devotion) in the case of one that has a form. How can a man go along a vacant path without a support? This master has a form. That lord is formless. The one having a form is easily seen. The formless one is not seen. There is pleasure of service of the one having a form; no (such) pleasure in the case of serving a formless one. The formless one himself is known through him who has a form. When the body is horripilated by the grace of the recollection of Viṣṇu, when tears of joy are in the eyes, then salvation becomes a slave. How does the sin committed in childhood, perish? (It perishes) by means of worship, gifts, vows, (visits to) holy places, mutterings (of hymns), sacrifices dedicated to you. How should one, giving up one's duty, practise severe penance? It is better to die in (i.e. while doing) one's duty. Another's duty is fraught with fear. How should one, giving up the practice laid down by holy texts, practise severe penance? A fool without (remaining in) the stage of human life, would not obtain success. The castes are made by Brahmā, and they have been assigned their respective duties.

110-124. Wealth that comes through the performance of the duty of one's own caste is said to be white. That little gift, given with devotion, made with white wealth, gives great religious merit and it cannot be reckoned. The gift given by men with the wealth brought for domestic rites through contact with mean people, would not be fruitful. They would not share its fruit. A fool, weak in knowledge, obtains that kind of stock which (is in conformity with the) kind of acts he performs with a desire for pleasure. The (fruit of the) act done in this world is had in the otherworld. If in the case of a man doing righteous acts, pain is produced, then he should not be distressed. That is (the result of) the deeds of the former body (i.e. existence). Grief alone is produced in the case of the man committing sins. O chief goddess, at that time one should not be delighted. As the master leads the beasts tied with a rope, men also are similarly led by the bond of their deeds on the earth. A monkey

dwelling in forest dances in every house; in the same way the beings are taken through all stocks by (their) deeds. As the master while playing sends forth a ball according to his desire, similarly a being is taken to happiness or unhappiness by his deeds. The being bound by (the effects of) his deeds, is unable to remove the bond. Gods and other sages also are bound by (the effects of) their deeds. Even the serpents remaining on Rudra's body consume poison on Kailāsa. They are unable to enjoy nectar. The effect of deeds (Karmayoni?) prevail. The charioteer or the Sun, who is said by the wise to give a sound body is a cripple. The effects of deeds (Karmayoni?) pravail. A royal sage Iadradyumna became an elephant due to his deeds. The result of deeds in that case was made ineffective by the powerful lord (?) All gods like Rudra, Brahmā, men and demons, being bound by (the effects of) acts, move on the earth. Viṣṇu formerly created the entire world, (and is) influenced by acts.

125-139. Those acts, dependent on Viṣṇu, perish by means of (repeating) the name of Rāma. Water is present everywhere; but that one at Prayāga gives salvation. To those who do the acts like this, worship of Keśava gives salvation. The being who does an act for the pleasure of senses, and would, through egotism think of the body, should go through an expiation, remembering (Viṣṇu). He undergoes the fruits of his past acts (only). The (fruit of) his acts does not grow later. Some praise the Planets; some evil spirits and goblins. Some praise deities; some have talked about the herbs. Some talk about a hymn, about a super-human power, about intellect or valour. So also about exertion, boldness, courage and prudence. All follow their desires talking about acts resulting from egotism. This is my definite idea. This is what is told by the former wise men. When a being is full of religious merit and there is no sin (in him), and when he has the two-fold knowledge, then his merit would be pleasant. When his sin and religious merit are equal, he remains in (i.e. doing) acts. When he has attained the equanimity of mind, he would reach the place of joy. Of him, who has discarded everything outwardly, but would long for (every thing) mentally, such a behaviour is useless and he will have to undergo (fruits of) his sins. A man does acts outwardly; but mentally he is desireless. Such a sacrifice is mediocre. He would not obtain

its complete fruit. Discarding acts outwardly, and mentally depending upon (i.e. looking upon everything as) void – such a sacrifice is said to be the best – difficult to be had even by the meditating sages. Some abandon everything through anger; some through the power of discussion. Some discard everything with difficulty. All (such) sacrifices are mediocre. A man endowed with devotion through good mind, and not influenced by anger etc., obtains a good position, though smeared with (the effects of) acts. He who is dropped from abstract meditation, would be born in the house of the pure and the rich or in the family – chief being that of a brāhmaṇa – of the intelligent meditating sages. In a short time he acquires complete abstract meditation.

140-153. Due to abstract meditation, devotion (to) and grace (of the lord), he would reach the position of Brahman of the nature of) intelligence and joy. How can one wash off (the effect of) one's act with a harmful act as mud with mud or blood with blood? How can a sacrifice full of a harmful act be capable of destroying (the effect of one's) acts? Sacrifices performed with a desire for (going to) heaven give little happiness in heaven. Even though many, the pleasures there are transitory. Without devotion for Viṣṇu, there is no eternal happiness in (i.e. from) them. (Except) a sovereign empire giving pleasure and happiness in heaven, I do not desire anything else. I am afraid of living in a womb (i.e. of rebirth). With (hammers of) iron a stone alone is broken, and not a ruby. A crane eats aquatic beings, (but) would avoid frogs etc. Similarly, Yama, the destroyer of everything, would avoid Viṣṇu's servants. He who protects is the one that removes difficulties, and is said to be the guardian. He lodges at his place him who has (committed) hundreds of faults; since Kṛṣṇa favours him who has committed an offence. He gets the fruit today. What does the protector do? In the same way, the soul in this body, shows favour to them depending upon others.[1] Along with the strong, he does not slowly go to the other end.[2] He gave salvation to the hunter, and himself emancipated Kubjā. He is difficult to be had (i.e. seen even) in a dream by Brahmā and others, but is easily accessible in a cowherd's house. When he ate what was left over

1, 2. verses 148, 149 etc. and many others in this chapter are not clear.

by the cowherds, he himself emancipated them. O goddess, the highest soul, Viṣṇu, is always praised by the meditating sages. The immutable Puruṣa, along with Lakṣmī, is amazing. Those who everyday recite this narration, are freed from all sins, and go to the eternal position of Viṣṇu. One who recites it with this devotion near (the image of) Viṣṇu, would obtain the highest position after enjoying happiness in this world.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTYTHREE

The Holy Places in Jambūdvīpa

Pārvatī said:

1. O you of a good vow, tell me about the holy places that exist on this island. This island is fashioned by the lord as the king of all islands. O lord, favouring me, tell me about them with (i.e. counting) their number.

Mahādeva said:

2-12. The Omnipresent (lord) should be seen in all beings on the earth. Whatever primary substance, with the mobile and the immobile, is seen in the seven worlds, is not seen or heard by me to be without him. Therefore, the great god Viṣṇu, Keśava, who removes affliction, would live in the form of a holy place on this island, O chief goddess. I shall certainly tell you about all the holy places. First is the holy place (called) Puṣkara, auspicious and best among the holy places. Second holy place is Vārāṇasī, giving salvation. Third sacred spot is Naimiṣa, said to be purifying by the sages. Fourth is Prayāga, said to be the best among the holy places. Fifth is said to be Kārmuka that has sprung up on Gandhamādana. Sixth is the holy place called Mānasa, pleasing to the gods. Seventh is Viśvakāya on the auspicious Avara mountain. Eighth is called Gautama, formerly fashioned on Mandara. Ninth is Madotkaṭa; tenth is Caitrarathaka. Eleventh is Kānyakubja where Vāmana (i.e. Viṣṇu) dwells. Twelfth is Malaya; then there is Kubjāmraka. (Then there are) Viśveśvara, Girikarṇa, Kedāra, giving a good

position (i.e. leading to salvation). Bāhya is on the surface of Himālaya; similariy there is Gopaka on Gokarṇa. On the Himālaya is Sthāneśvara; and Bilvapatrika on Bilvaka. The holy place Mādhava is on Śrīśaila; and Bhadra is on Bhadreśvara. Vijaya is said to be on Vārāha, and Vaiṣṇava on Vaiṣṇava mountain. On Rudrakoṭa is Raudra; and on the Kāliñjara mountain is Paitrya. The holy place Kampila is on Kampila, and Karkoṭaka on Mukuṭa.

13-30. O Chief goddess, the place holy due to Śālagrāma is on the bank of the Gallikā. On (the bank of) Narmadā is one called Śiva, and on (the bank of) Māyā is Viśvarūpaka. On the Raivata mountain have come up (the holy places, namely) Utpalākṣa, Sahasrākṣa. On (the bank of) Gaṅgā is Pitṛtīrtha, so also is Viṣṇupādodbhava. On (the bank of) Vipāśā is Vipāpā, and Puṇḍravardhana is at Pāṭala. Nārāyaṇa is on Supārśva, and Viṣṇu temple on Trikūṭa. On Vipula is one named Vipula, and Kalyāṇa is on Malaya mountain. At Koṭitīrtha is Kaurava, and Sugandha is on Gandhamādana. Trisandhyā is at Kubjāmraka, and Haripriya at Gaṅgādvāra. In the region of Vindhya is Śaila, and Sārasvata is said to be on Badari. On (the bank of) the Kālindī is Kalparūpa, and Sāyaka is said to be on Sahya. Cāndra is in Candra region, and Ramaṇa is the chief among the holy places. On (the bank of) Yamunā is (the one) called Mṛga; and Kurūdbhava is on Karavīra. The holy place called Umā is on the Vināyaka mountain. Ārogya is in the Bhāskara country. Maheśvara is at Mahākāla. A holy place is named Abhayada. On Vindhya is one called Amṛta. Viśvarūpa is in Maṇḍapa. In Īśvara city is one called Svāhā. On (the bank of) Pracaṇḍā is Vaigaleya, and Cāṇḍika in Amarakaṇṭaka. At the holy place of Prabhāsa is Someśvara, and there is also Puṣkara. Devamātra is situated on the bank of Pārāvata on Sarasvatī. At Mahāpadma is Mahālaya, and Piṅgaleśvara on (the bank of) Payoṣṇī. So also is a holy place on (the bank of) Siṁhikā, and at Saurava one called Ravi. In the Kṛttikā-region is the holy place Kārtika; and Śaṅkara on mountain Śaṅkara. Similarly at the confluence of Subhadrā and Sindhu is a divine holy place called Utpala. Then there is Gāṇapatya on the mountain called Viṣṇu. Then on Jālandhara is the holy place which is called Viṣṇumukha. At Tāra is one called Tāraka on the mountain

called Viṣṇu. Pauṇḍra is in the Devadāruvana, and Pauśka in the Kāśmīra region. The snowy Bhauma is on Himālaya, so also are Catuṣṭika and Pauṣṭika. Similarly the holy place Kapālamocana has come up at Māyāpura. Then is the holy place Śaṅkhoddhāra (of) the god holding the conch. At Piṇḍa is one named Piṇḍa, and Vaikhānasa at Siddha. On (the bank of) Acchoda is Viṣṇukāma, giving religious merit, sensuous enjoyment, worldly prosperity and salvation. On the northern bank is Auṣadhya, and Kuśodaka is at Kuśadvīpa. Manmatha is on Hemakūṭa, and Satyavādana on Kumuda. At the bank of Vadantī is the holy place called Āśvaka, and Mātṛka is said to exist on Vindhya.

31-40. On Citta is the holy place (called) Brahmamaya which is said to be (the most) purifying of all holy places. O beautiful lady, listen to the description of the holy place best of all these. A holy place (like) Viṣṇumaya never existed (before) nor will be there. Merely by uttering (its) name, one who has killed a brāhmaṇa, or snatched gold, or has killed a child or a cow, is freed (from the sin) due to Viṣṇu's grace. In the Kali age Dvāravatī is charming, and god Viṣṇu is excellent. The salvation of those men who see (the image of) the lord, is certain. O great goddess, I, remaining among the wise, thus think of that blessed lord Viṣṇu, the master of all. These hundred and eight holy places are told here. He who mutters their names or hears them is free from all sins. He who, after bathing in these holy places, sees (the image of) Nārāyaṇa Hari (i.e. Viṣṇu), is freed from all sins and goes to the ancient Viṣṇu, the lord of the world, said to be the holy place purifying the worlds. Those best men who go to (these holy places) go to the highest position (i.e. salvation). One should get this to be heard (i.e. recited) at (the time of) a rite in honour of the dead ancestors. Enjoying pleasures in this world, one goes to the eternal (position) of Viṣṇu. (By reciting these names) at the time of the gift of a cow, or the gift at the time of a śrāddha, or (by reciting it) everyday, or at the rite of worshipping a deity, one attains the highest Brahman.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTYFOUR

The Greatness of Vetravatī

Mahādeva said:

1-10. I shall tell (you) the greatness of Vetravatī. Listen, O beautiful lady. By bathing there (i.e. in the river) men are free till deluge. Vṛtra made a tank called Mahāgambhīra. That divine one, destroyer of heaps of great sins, came out from that tank. O best goddess, like Gaṅgā this is the best river. Merely on looking at her heaps of sins come to an end. O goddess, I shall tell you an old account, hearing which sinners are freed from faults and bondage of (their) acts. A king (named Vidāruṇa) ruled in the city of Campaka. He was always wicked, of a wicked form, and he very much harassed people. He was impious, the (very) form of impiety, and given to censuring Viṣṇu. He disregarded deities and brāhmaṇas, and was a great hater of the (four) stages of human life. He was rich, and was given to condemning the Vedas; he was foolish and cruel. He was a rogue, was interested in heterodox doctrines and outraged others' wives. His name was Vidāruṇa, and he was a fool. Once, by chance, he came to that river (Vetravatī). O chief goddess, he, intent on hunting, himself became a leper due to his censuring brāhmaṇas. He talked nonsense, was wicked-hearted, a rogue and a cruel beast. He was always engaged in censuring the Vedas and polluted cows and holy texts.

11-31. The king, surrounded by his friends, who was like this, was wandering in a forest; being oppressed by thirst, he got down from (his) horse, drank water and went home. Due to the drinking of the water, his leprosy certainly disappeared. Especially the mind of the king became clear. O chief goddess, at that time in (the mind of) him devotion for Viṣṇu sprang up. From that time he always bathed (in Vetravatī). O chief goddess, he became spotless and endowed with handsomeness. Having enjoyed pleasure in this world and having performed many sacrifices, he gave gifts to brāhmaṇas and went to the position of Viṣṇu. Knowing this, O goddess, those brāhmaṇas who bathe especially in Vetravatī, are freed, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain. The brāhmaṇas—or a kṣatriya, or a vaiśya or a

śūdra—who bathe here are freed, O best goddess. O goddess, an outcast or a censurer of the Vedas, who, in the month of Kārtika or Māgha, bathes at the confluence of rivers, is free from sins. Especially a killer of a brāhmaṇa who bathes there where her confluence with Sābhramatī is seen, is always freed. O sinless one, the village there is a divine city, of the form of heaven. O goddess, Brahmā practised many abstract meditations there. No rebirth is (had by one) who has bathed and eaten there. O goddess, she is said to be another Gaṅgā, especially in the Kali age. Those men who desire happiness and wealth, who desire heaven, bathe there repeatedly, enjoy happiness in this world, and go to the eternal (position) of Viṣṇu. Those born in the solar race and the lunar race, who came here and bathed in Vetravatī obtained bliss. She removes misery when seen, and mental sin when touched. O goddess, one who bathes in and drinks (her) water undoubtedly enjoys salvation. By bathing (in her), muttering hymns and performing sacrifices (on her bank) one gets infinite fruit. One should go to the holy place of Vārāṇasī, and practise Cāndrāyaṇa-vow. O best goddess, the religious merit on having gone there is great. If a man dies especially on (the bank of) Vetravatī, he becomes four-armed, and goes to the highest (position) of Viṣṇu. O best goddess, all the holy places, deities, dead ancestors that are there on the earth, live here in Vetravatī. O you beautiful lady, what is the use of talking much about other things repeatedly? O you ancient one, there is no other holy place like Vetravatī on the earth. O great goddess, I, Viṣṇu, so also Brahmā, gods and great sages, deities all stay in Vetravatī. Those who bathe in Vetravatī, once, or twice or especially three times (a day) are freed. There is no doubt about it.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTYFIVE

The Greatness of Sābhramatī

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-9. O goddess, I shall aptly describe the greatness of Sābhramatī. The best sage Kaśyapa practised severe penance. For many years he practised severe penance on the charming Arbuda mountain full of various trees. Having gone there where the charming, sin-destroying Sarasvatī flows, the sage Kaśyapa practised penance. O goddess, one day he went to the Naimiṣa (forest where) all the sages were narrating stories in many ways. Then the sages properly asked that sage Kaśyapa: "O Kaśyapa, for our pleasure, bring Gaṅgā here, O lord. That best river will pass by your name." Having heard their words, and having saluted those brāhmaṇas, he came to the Arbuda forest, near the bank of Sarasvatī. He practised there very severe penance. That brāhmaṇa Kaśyapa propitiated me. I then appeared in person in front of that excellent brāhmaṇa. "Well-being to you; ask for a boon that is in your mind."

Kaśyapa said:

10-14. O lord of the world, you are capable of granting a boon. Give me specially that Gaṅgā which is on your head and which is pure and destroys sins. O great god, I salute you.

Then, O goddess, I said: "O best brāhmaṇa, take (her)." Then taking off a hair from my matted hair, I gave him the Gaṅgā. Taking her, the best brāhmaṇa gladly went to his place. The holy place named Keśarandhra is the abode of Kaśyapa. Surrounded by sages, O chief goddess, he went there. That excellent river Kāśyapī was brought by Kaśyapa, on merely seeing which, (even) a killer of a brāhmaṇa was freed.

Pārvatī said:

15-16. Tell me about the religious merit acquired by just a bath, O lord of the world. You are kind. Show compassion to me. What would be the religious merit due to seeing her, and what due to the bath? Tell me (that), O lord of gods. O Brahman, please tell me what kind of greatness (she has).

Mahādeva said:

17-35. I have heard about many holy places and sanctuaries. Due to the grace of lord Viṣṇu many rivers flowing into the ocean (like) Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Revā, Tāpī, so also Mahānadī, Godāvarī, Tuṅgabhadrā, Kauśikī, so also Gallikā, (and) Kāverī, Vedikā, Bhadrā, Śarayū, Pāpahāriṇī (destroyer of sins), so also other various rivers, all instant sin-destroyers (are heard about by me). The king of holy places—Prayāga, Kāśī, and Puṣkara, so also the one called Naimiṣāraṇya, so also the holy place Amarakaṇṭaka, the excellent holy place of Dvārakā, the excellent Arbudāraṇya—such divine and other various holy places, I have heard about due to Viṣṇu's grace. Formerly, Bhagīratha, desiring (to go to) Viṣṇu's heaven, had solicited me. Then, O Pārvatī, I gave him this Gaṅgā. On the words of the sages I again gave her to Kaśyapa. This Kāśyapī Gaṅgā always removes diseases and blemishes. O beautiful lady, I shall tell you. Listen, what she is called in each age. In Kṛta (age) she was called Kṛtavatī and Girikarṇikā in Tretā. She is named Candanā in Dvāpara, and she is known as Sābhramatī in Kali (age). Those men who everyday (go to her for bathing) are freed from all sins and go to Viṣṇu's (eternal position). O goddess, that fruit which men get by bathing at the holy place Plakṣa, and in Sarasvatī, is got by a daily bath in Sābhramatī everyday. There is no doubt about it, since Vyāsa's statement is to that effect. A man gets that fruit by bathing in Sābhramatī which he gets by bathing in the later half of Śrāvaṇa or everyday, or by properly offering a śrāddha on the new-moon day. A man gets that fruit by bathing in Sābhramatī which he gets in Kārtika when (the Sun) is joined with the Kṛttikā (constellation) at Śrīsthala in front of (the image of) Mādhava. O goddess, this is the greatest (river). It is purifying in all worlds. She is most blessed, is pure, and destroys sins, O goddess. On (the bank of) Sābhramatī always live those connected with the east (i.e. the Easterners), the Northerners. The Westerners and the Southerners all go to Kheṭaka everyday near Brahmā, under the pretext of a pilgrimage only. O goddess, there is no doubt that they come there on the full-moon day of Kārtika. There they offer a śrāddha and feed brāhmaṇas.

36-50. (There) men perform various religious rites daily, so also various sacrifices. They make various gifts everyday in all the four ages. No doubt should be entertained in this matter. Yavakrīta, and Raibhya, Kakṣīvat, so also Uśija, Bhṛgu, Aṅgiras, so also Kaṇva, and the intelligent Punarvasu, Bandin, endowed with virtues, (all) have resorted to the Eastern direction. So also the magnanimous ones (living) in the north—like Madhumat, so also the noble Subandhu, and the powerful Dattātreya, similarly Śikhin, Dīrghatamas, so also Gautama and Kaśyapa, in the same way Śvetaketu, Kahoḍa, Pulaha and Devala, and Viśvāmitra and Bharadvāja, and powerful Jamadagni, Ṛcīca's son Garga, so also the sage Uddālaka, and Devaśarman, Dhaumya, Āstika, so also Kaśyapa, and Lomaśa, Nābhiketu, and Lomaharṣaṇa, so also the sage Ugraśravas, Bhārgava Cyavana, Vālakhilya and others, all go there. Bathing (there), fasting and very highly devoted to Viṣṇu holding conches, discs and maces, they always stay on the bank. Pitṛtīrtha, named Gayā, is auspicious and best among all holy places. There the grandsire, the lord of the gods, himself lives. The dead ancestors, desiring a portion (of the offerings) of a śrāddha, have sung a verse: Many sons should be desired; even one of them would go to Gayā, or would perform a horse-sacrifice, or would let loose a black bull. In the same way Vārāṇasī is auspicious, and is always dear to the dead ancestors, which due to my proximity, gives enjoyments and salvation. By my order the lord of gods called Bindumādhava, always especially dwells at Vārāṇasī, O chief goddess. Therefore, this my city is always the most blessed and the greatest. Vimaleśvara is auspicious, and is a holy place dear to the dead ancestors. Pitṛtīrtha—Prayāga—is endowed with all holy places.

51-60. They come into the water of Sābhramatī on my words. The noble Vaṭeśvara is endowed with Viṣṇu. O chief goddess, Daśāśvamedha and the auspicious Gaṅgādvāra always live in Sābhramatī by my order. Nandā, Lalitādevī and the holy place with seven streams; so also the (holy place) called Mitrapada and Śaṅkara's abode Kedāra; and Gaṅgāsāgara as they call it; all this, being full of holy places, is auspicious. Like this there is the holy place called Brahmasaras in the pool of Śatadru. So also the holy place called Naimiṣa. All these, O

goddess, undoubtdely live in the water of Sābhramatī. The auspicious river Śvetavalkalinī, (the river) Śvetahiraṇmayī, (the river) Hastimatī, or Arthaghnī, flowing towards the ocean — all these are dear to the dead ancestors, and give the fruit of a crore of śrāddhas. Śrāddhas should be offered there by sons for the good of their dead ancestors. There is a city named Pāṭala or Vāḍava, O beautiful lady. All these rivers have always especially reached (i.e. flowed into) Sābhramatī. Those men on the earth who bathe there and offer gifts, enjoy happiness in this world and go to the eternal (place) of Viṣṇu. Jambūdvīpa is very meritorious, where religious merit grows. There is a very meritorious (region), called Ārya, fulfilling all desires.

61-81a. (Then) there is a holy place called Nīlakaṇṭha; (then there is) Nandahrada; so also the holy place Rudrahrada, and the auspicious Rudra-mahālaya. Presenting themselves, the very auspicious Mandākinī, so also the great river Acchodā — these two flow into Sābhramatī. Due to offering piṇḍas (i.e. oblations to dead ancestors) into Gaṅgā, the wise say that these — Dhūmrā, Mitrapada, similarly Vaijanātha, Dṛśadvara, river Kṣiprā, Mahākāla, so also the mountain Kāliñjara, Gaṅgodbhūta, Harodbheda, Narmadākāra — are equal (in religious merit). O chief goddess, these places sacred to Brahmā are on the northern bank of Sābhramatī, are protected by gods led by Brahmā. O great goddess, they destroy people's sins merely by their being remembered. Then what to say of those men offering śrāddhas, O chief goddess? Oṁkāra, a holy place of the dead ancestors, the water of Kāverī, Kapilā, the union of Caṇḍavegā.—bathing in this would be a hundredfold more meritorious than (at) Kurukṣetra. O goddess, formerly (Śiva's) attendants took the holy place Kadamba, along with the chief of the attendants, to the confluence of Vātaghnī. This congregation of the holy places is narrated by me by way of illustration. Even the lord of speech cannot correctly (describe) the expanse of the holy places. Truth, pity and control of senses are holy places. One should certainly bathe in her holy place with effort. The morning is of the three muhūrtas (i.e. periods) up to saṅgava[1]—a bath at this time is dear to the gods. Mid-day

1. Saṅgava—Name of a particular part of day, said to be three

consists of three muhūrtas (i.e. period); after that is afternoon. Bathing, offering piṇḍas causes delight to the dead ancestors. Evening has three muhūrtas. One should not perform a śrāddha etc. at that time. That time is called demonish, and is censured for all (religious) acts. Always the fifteen muhūrtas of the day are well-known. Among them the eighth one is said to be *kutapa.* Since at mid-day the sun becomes dull (in lustre), therefore, it gives infinite fruit by offering piṇḍas to the dead ancestors. Mid-day, a vessel made of buffalo's horns, so also a Ṇepāla-blanket, silver, darbhas, so also cows, daughter's son, and sesamum-seeds are *kutapa.* Sin is said to be mean. Since all these eight cause remorse for it, they are known as *kutapa.* That group of four muhūrtas subsequent to *kutapa,* and the group of five is desired as the time for a śrāddha. Darbhas and sesamum-seeds are said to have sprung from the body of Viṣṇu for the protection of śrāddha. Thus the residents of heaven say. Those living at the holy places should offer water with sesamum-seeds to the dead by standing in water and with darbhas in their hands. Thus the śrāddha is not harmed.

81b-94. Giving the holy places these names and putting them into Sābhramatī, O goddess, I gave (the river) to Kaśyapa. This Kaśyapa is my devotee, and he is always dear to me. Therefore, I gave (him) this pure Gaṅgā destroying sins. O noble one, having placed myself—I am having Śaṅkara as my name there—at the holy place, viz. Brahmacārika, I, called Īśa, remain there for the good of the world, and am named Brahmacārīśa. When in the vicinity of Sābhramatī, one devoutly worships especially Brahmacārīśa in the Kali-age, one enjoys pleasure in this world and goes to the great position of Śiva. Even if a man suffering from severe diseases goes there, his disease quickly vanishes on merely seeing the deity, O great goddess. When the man with his senses controlled, and fasting, and being very steady, devoutly worships (the lord), then I appear before him in the form of a meditating sage. I give him the desired objects. O you beautiful lady, I am telling the truth and the truth only. I quickly remove the disease of those

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muhūrtas after Prātastana or early dawn and to form the second of the five divisions of day.

persons who especially come to my place. I have described diseases to be of eightyfour names. Each one of the diseases would perish merely on seeing (the image). O daughter of the (Himalaya) Mountain, my phallus would not be there. My place is only there. There is no doubt about it. On one occasion the powerful king Brahmadatta of the solar race, of a severe penance, once practised penance there for a long time, O chief goddess. There he practised in many ways the (vow called) Pañcāgnisādhana.[1] He practised many austerities like fasting for a month etc.

95-113. In this way the king practised a severe penance for a long time. Then I appeared before him in person for (granting him) a boon, O beautiful lady. "O Brahmadatta, listen to (these) great (i.e. important) words. I shall undoubtedly grant you everyday whatever you desire." He said: "O lord of gods, if whatever I desire is (to be) given, then always grant me one boon. May the lord be born by my name on the earth, O lord of gods." O sinless one, being pleased with those words, I granted him the boon. (Since) then, O chief goddess, I stay with him. (To him) who remaining here, fasts and is fully devoted, I grant the desired objects as long as the fourteen Indras rule. Listen to what I give to the brāhmaṇas who, having come here, especially mutter the Rudra hymn etc. A man obtains quickly all that is desired in the Kali-age, like pleasure from his wife, pleasure from his son; it increases wealth. It gives glory and affluence, and destroys diseases etc. O Pārvatī, my devotees on the earth come here and perform rites like bathing, giving gifts in this terrible Kali-age. O chief goddess, I give the desired objects. This is the truth and the truth only. The king, having posted there another celibate named Gaṅgādhara, and having lived there for five days, then went to his own kingdom. The very great Brahmadatta, famous in the world, who knew piety, ruled for five myriad years. Then the king, having enjoyed the kingdom for some time, went to Śiva's world, (and) to the excellent position called Brahmā. The two gods having my name stay there—one is Brahmācārīśa, and the other one is said to be

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1. Pañcāgnisādhana—A kind of penance in which one has to bear five fires: one in front, one at the back, one on the left, and one on the right, and the fifth fire is the sun.

Gaṅgādhara. To those men who worship especially at my place, I certainly give everything wanted by them in the world. The place itself is always the Phallus. Men should always go there. That wise man who offers there flowers, incense, eatables of various kinds, certainly obtains everything. I give all to them who worship at my place with bilva-leaves, flowers and sandal etc. He who everyday listens to the account of Brahmacārin, obtains happiness in this world, and goes to the vicinity of Śiva, where god Gaṅgādhara, Bhūtida (i.e. giver of happiness) always dwells.

114-135. The other one called Brahmacārīśa always lives (there). From them one certainly obtains the position of Śiva by means of meditation. A disease perishes on seeing him. By worshipping (him) a man would obtain (long) life. O chief goddess, there is no doubt that by bathing there a man would enjoy salvation. O beautiful lady, listen. I shall describe a very wonderful holy place, known as Rājakhaḍga, especially on the Sābhramatī. King Vaikartana, born in the solar race, was of a bad conduct, sinful, and censured brāhmaṇas. He bore malice against his preceptors; was always angry; censured all (religious) acts; he was always interested in others' wives; and he always harmed Viṣṇu. He always harassed his subjects in many ways. Such a wicked one, as he was, lived on the earth always. O beautiful lady, listen properly. When some time passed, leprosy was produced in (i.e. overcame) him due to his sin (and) his (ill) luck. Observing his body, and thinking repeatedly as to what to do, he was full of anxiety. Once, by chance, he went into a forest for sport. Having reached the bank of Sābhramatī there, he remained there. He bathed there, and drank excellent water. Due to the bath there, his body instantly was seen to be divine. His figure was seen to be of good gold, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain. Just then the king certainly became (like that). Having got the divine form, the king enjoyed the kingdom there for some time, and then went to the highest position of Śiva, O chief goddess. Then this holy place, called Rājakhaḍga, came up. He who bathes here and gives gifts, enjoys happiness in this world, and goes to the eternal (place) of Viṣṇu. They have no disease and never have grief. A man who everyday bathes in this (holy place) called Rājakhaḍga, would obtain

heaven, and is honoured by Brahmā and others. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, he was called Satyeśvara in the Kṛta age, Bhuvaneśvara in the Tretā age, and Rājeśvara in the Dvāpara age. In this Kali age, the lord of the universe has vanished. Therefore this holy place, called Rājakhaḍga, has come up. Those men who devoutly offer oblations to their dead ancestors here, are declared to be of religious acts on the earth. The killers of brāhmaṇas or of children, who bathe here, get free from blemishes, and go to the vicinty of Śiva. The dead ancestors of them who offer a dark (cow) on (the bank of) Sābhramatī, are pleased till the deluge. O goddess, there is no fear for those men who listen to this divine account called Rājakhaḍga. In the same way diseases and blemishes vanish by listening to and reciting it.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTYSIX

The Greatness of Nanditīrtha

Pārvatī said:

1. Tell me which regions that Sābhramatī, having flowed out from Nandikuṇḍa, purified, and which holy places she, crossing the Arbuda mountain, brought about.

Sūta said:

2. When the goddess spoke this, Śiva, the lord of the universe, spoke (these) words to Pārvatī who fascinated the world.

Mahādeva said:

3-19. The sages first got fashioned the holy place called Kapālamocana, after the very purifying holy place Nandikuṇḍa. The holy place is more lustrous than all (others), and is extremely purifying. Here I had dropped the skull called *Kapāla*. Therefore, O Pārvatī, it became the holy place (called) *Kapālamocana*. It clearly purifies all the beings, and is well-

known in the world. That holy place, the lord of holy places, is called Kapālakuṇḍa, at which pure and auspicious holy place the noble ones (like) gods, so also nāgas, gandharvas, and kinnaras etc. live. The holy place is known in the three worlds and gives knowledge and salvation. Having bathed there and having purified oneself, one should fast for a night, worship Kapāleśa and feed brāhmaṇas. Even by giving (a piece of) cloth (to a brāhmaṇa) there, one would get the fruit of an Agnihotra. One who, at that holy place, has resorted to the vow of seeing (the lord), would certainly go to Śiva's heaven after having cast one's body. O chief goddess, formerly Saudāsa, on bathing at this holy place, was freed from (the sin of) a brāhmaṇa's murder, and obtained knowledge. The very powerful Sudāsa was born in the family of Bhagīratha. His son Mitrasaha was also known as Saudāsa. Due to the curse of Vasiṣṭha Saudāsa obtained the body of a demon. After having bathed in Sābhramatī, he became free from the sin due to the curse. Here, at this holy place called Nandi, are always present the pure rivers giving religious merit like Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Godāvarī and Sarasvatī. Learned men should especially make the gift of a cow, land, bed, daughter. A bath in Sābhramatī is said to be like this gift. Here even all the fallen are purified merely by means of the touch of the water. The dead ancestors of the man who, being greatly devoted, performs a śrāddha here, are pleased, and go to the highest position.

Those men who always listen to this divine account, are freed from all sins and would obtain absorption into Viṣṇu. For them who praise Maheśvara by means of their acts, mentally and by words, there is no grief till deluge.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTYSEVEN

Vikīrṇatīrtha and Śvetodbhava

Mahādeva said:

1-14. The river Sābhramatī, (flowing) from the region of Nandi(tīrtha), came to the Vikīrṇa forest resorted to by brāhmaṇas and sages. Due to the great speed of her water and the resistance of the mountains she was divided into seven (streams) and flowed toward the southern sea. The first (stream) is the auspicious Sābhramatī. The second one is Setikā. The third auspicious one is Valkinī, and the fourth Hiraṇmayī. The fifth one, Hastimatī, is said to remove all sins. The sixth one, Vetravatī, was formerly fashioned by Vṛtra. This highly divine one moved (i.e. flowed) out from the pool of Vṛtra. So she became (i.e. came to be known as) Vetravatī, destroying great sins. The seventh one, Bhadramukhī purifying the world, is rich in auspiciousness. She, purifying those regions with these seven streams, has proceeded with the seven streams. He who offers a śrāddha at Vikīrṇa-tīrtha to the dead ancestors, gets that fruit which will be (i.e. is) the fruit of a bath at Gayā. Those who have violated their vows, who are fallen, who missed the piṇḍas with oblations of water, get freed when piṇḍas and water are offered to them at Vikīrṇa. He who would offer a śrāddha there, would certainly be one of Śiva's attendants. Therefore, one should devoutly offer a śrāddha there as is laid down in the three Vedas. "O brāhmaṇas, especially take a bath at this (place of) rise of the seven rivers, O best brāhmaṇas, longing for the world of sages." Kaśyapa especially spoke thus to brāhmaṇas. If a bath is taken here, it always removes all griefs. This holy place (Vikīrṇa) is best among holy places, is best among the best. This holy place Vikīrṇa gives auspiciousness and removes diseases and blemishes. Those men who especially always bathe here in the Kali age, become meritorious. There is no doubt about it. Vikīrṇatīrtha is very purifying like Gayā-tīrtha. It always gives religious merit to the dead ancestors, and destroys people's misery. Thus Vikīrṇa-tīrtha is described.

15-23. A holy place superior to this, and an excellent one, is called Śvetodbhava, wherefrom the river Śvetā has sprung up

due to the ash (applied) to my back and belly. She, the destroyer of all sins, is well-known in the three worlds. She has been produced due to the contact with the ash applied to Śiva's body; and is honoured by gods. A man who has bathed in it, has become pure and controlled, has lived there for three nights, is honoured in Rudra's world after seeing Mahākāleśvara. There is no doubt that the dead ancestors of him who offers (them) a piṇḍa with darbhas and sesamum-seeds on her bank, are very much gratified. Śvetagaṅgā is very auspicious, and frees one from misery and poverty by bathing in which, O goddess, great happiness is obtained. O Pārvatī I always stay at its confluence. The bath which men take here, and the gifts they give, would undoubtedly be for them infinitely fruitful. On the confluence at that place god Bhūteśvara certainly lives. Those best men who offer incense, lamp, flowers and wave lights are meritorious. He who, getting a bilva-leaf, offers it on (the Phallus of) Śiva, always obtains the desired object in the vicinity of Śiva on (the bank of) Śvetā.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTYEIGHT

The Greatness of Gaṇatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-15. One intent on a pilgrimage to holy places, should then go to Gaṇatīrtha. It is called Triviṣṭapa by Śiva's attendants and is on the bank of Candanā. A man bathing on the full-moon day at Triviṣṭapa, and being composed, is freed from (the sin of) the murder of a brāhmaṇa. No doubt should be entertained about this. He too, the noble and meritorious one, who stays at Triviṣṭapa during the four months of the rainy season, is also honoured in Rudra's world. A man, having bathed at Gaṇatīrtha and fasted on the Aṣṭamī (day), and having bathed at the confluence of Bakulā, goes to heaven. A man, having bathed at that holy place and having seen Bakuleśa, would obtain the position of the chief of Śiva's attendants due to the grace

of the lord of Śiva's attendants. A man hearing (about) this which is pure, very meritorious, increasing religious merit and (span of) life, obtains religious merit equal to (that obtained from) a bath in Gaṅgā. Having stayed here, a man, observing a fast, with his senses controlled and composed, who thus mutters the names of the charming lord of Śiva's attendants, obtains all pleasures. This is the truth and the (only) truth, O you of a beautiful face. (There was) the powerful king, Viśvadatta, of the lunar dynasty. He practised penance here for a long time, O chief goddess. Then due to Śrī Gaṇeśa's grace he obtained the position of the chief of Śiva's attendants. All the meritorious sages like Vasiṣṭha, Vāmadeva, Hoḍa, Kauśītaka, Bharadvāja. Aṅgiras, Viśvāmitra and Vāmana, everyday serve (the lord) due to Gaṇeśa's grace, O great goddess. A sonless man obtains sons, a poor man gets wealth, an ignorant man obtains knowledge, and a man desiring salvation would obtain salvation. O you beautiful lady, what is the use of repeatedly talking profusely about any other thing? He who would bathe here and offer worship, is freed from all sins, and goes to the highest position of Viṣṇu, (and reaches) Śiva of the form of Viṣṇu, and Viṣṇu of the form of Śiva. Due to Viṣṇu's grace, O goddess, I do not see any difference (between the two of us).

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTYNINE

The Greatness of Agnipāleśvara

Mahādeva said:

1-19a. On the northern bank of Sābhramatī (the holy place called) Agnitīrtha is known. The holy place Tīrthapāleśvara is situated not far away in the north-eastern direction from her, where Caṇḍī has settled. That seat of the Yogamātṛs brings in complete welfare. There the great mothers have stayed with great effort and for favouring the world. A man of a firm vow, having stayed there for three nights, should go to that god Caṇḍikeśvara, the lord of gods. Having bathed in Sābhramatī

near Mātṛtīrtha, he being fully concentrated, should go to Mātṛmaṇḍala. A man obtains the fruit of the gift of a thousand cows after having bathed at Agnitīrtha and seen Cāmuṇḍā. For him there is no fear from demons, evil spirits and goblins. O chief goddess, at the place where river Gokhurā has joined Sābhramatī, there are thousands of holy places. O Pārvatī, there a srāddha should be offered with sesamum powder. (A man) having offered piṇḍas and fed brāhmaṇas, would obtain an undecaying position. There was a king Kukardama, who was most sinful, irresistible, wicked, foolish, who possessed ego, who censured brāhmaṇas, killed cows and children, who was most sinful and always indomitable. O chief goddess, when he was ruling in the city called Piṇḍāra, he died at an auspicious time. He who was dead, was born here as an evil spirit, O great goddess. He, of a yellow face, with his mouth parched up, having yellow hair, and harsh, very tall, having profuse hair, oppressed by hunger and thirst, subsisting on air, moved here and there. Accompanied by many evil spirits he wailed 'Hā, Hā'. The evil spirits near him also said: "What should be done?" Those other wicked evil spirits also crying and oppressed by hunger, thirst etc., came in contact with the king. With the king they moved to many uninhabited countries. On the way neither water nor food was ever seen (by them). Those evil spirits of wicked forms moved on the earth. They ate the flesh of corpses and always drank blood. King Kukardama was thus always surrounded by them. Some time by chance he went to the hermitage of (his) preceptor. He had done religious acts in the former existence. Due to that he came in contact (with the preceptor).

Pārvatī said:

19b-20. O master, O lord of the universe, tell (me) what religious deeds he did. This was a sinner, a wicked one, and troubled brāhmaṇas. How did he have good company. Tell it to me (though) difficult.

Mahādeva said:

21-29a. I shall tell (you) all that this king had done in the previous existence. Listen (to it), O daughter of the (Himālaya)

Mountain. O goddess, in his previous existence, he was a brāhmaṇa who recited the Vedas. Having everyday worshipped Mahādeva, and honoured guests, this best brāhmaṇa took his food. Due to the prowess of that religious merit, he became a king in the city of Piṇḍāra, and was known as Kukardama. Through his body and mind, he did not perform religious acts. Due to that (ill) luck, he died and became the king of the evil spirits. His face was dry, his figure was dry, his complexion was yellow, and he was fearful. O chief goddess, (the effect of) the religious deeds done in a former existence does not perish. Due to that religious merit he came in the company of the preceptor in the (latter's) hermitage. Kahoḍa lived there. He saw the king of the evil spirits, whose face was dry, figure was dry, complexion was yellow, and who was fearful. His eyes were deep, he was a great sinner, and was accompanied by wicked evil spirits. His hair was raised, he had matted hair, he was of the nature of death, and was fierce. Seeing him like that at that time, the brāhmaṇa (Kahoḍa) was afflicted.

Kahoḍa said:

29b-31. At this charming, very wonderful place, viz. at the holy place of Agnipāleśvara, I always live. O king, you are our patron. How have your become the king of the evil spirits? On this auspicious earth, due to the result of which deeds have you become a wicked one, of a wicked form, of the nature of death, and fierce?

The evil spirit said:

32-39. O brāhmaṇa, listen to the sin I committed in the previous existence. I was king Kukardama in the city called Piṇḍāraka O divine one, listen to what I, living there, did. Formerly, (I indulged in) killing brāhmaṇas, telling lies etc. I harassed my subjects, always killed beings. I harmed the cows, and destroyed brāhmaṇas' vows. O brāhmaṇa, I always remained without a bath. I hurt the good. I was always given to censuring Viṣṇu, and blamed the devotees of Viṣṇu. My conduct was bad, I was wicked, and was always accompanied by śūdra females. I ate anywhere, and was never intent on being pure. Due to that (evil) deed, O lord of brāhmaṇas, I died and reached

the stock of an evil spirit and have become unhappy in many ways. The preceptor alone is the kinsman, the preceptor, the mother, the father of him who does not have a mother, a father, relatives and kinsmen. Realising this, O brāhmaṇa, please relieve me.

Kahoḍa said:

40-46. Listen, O best king. I shall do as you tell me. You will instantly attain salvation. There is no doubt about it. Even the pre-eminent evil spirits who are in your company, will also get release, especially at this excellent holy ploce.

Then, O chief goddess, that brāhmaṇa, having gone to the holy place, made them perform rites like offering water with sesamum-seeds. There is no (restriction as to) month or date. Repeatedly going to a holy place, one should perform rites like a śrāddha as formerly told by Brahmā to me. O goddess, when the (śrāddha-)rite was performed at the chief holy place, they were released and seated in an aeroplane they went to my city. O chief goddess, bathing and giving gifts at the place where Gokhurā has joined Sābhramatī, would secure the fruit of a crore of sacrifices. Salvation is said to be obtained there, where there would be (i.e. is) the holy place Agnitīrtha called Kapāleśvara. It would certainly be true (and) true (only).

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTY

Hiraṇyāsaṅgama Tīrtha

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-16. O goddess, I shall tell you about the great confluence of Hiraṇyā (with Sābhramatī). When that Sābhramatī Gaṅgā formerly had seven streams, then she—the daughter of Brahmā—was known as Saptasrotā. The seventh stream is known as Hiraṇyā. A sinful man having bathed at that holy place would obtain heaven. The mountain Satyavān is between Ṛkṣu and

Mañjuma. To its east is the auspicious confluence of Hiraṇyā (with Sābhramatī). Having bathed there and drunk (water) one would obtain an auspicious course. Having seen Nārāyaṇa Hari at Vanasthalī, one should then go to Hiraṇyāsaṅgameś-vara, a holy place, auspicious for celestial nymphs, where Urvaśī, (the most) beautiful among the celestial nymphs, was formerly born. There Nara and Nārāyaṇa practised excellent penance. At the charming and auspicious confluence of Hiraṇyā (with Sābhramatī), which removes great sins, all sages, with their sins gone, bathe. O goddess, the brāhmaṇas like Vasiṣṭha and like Vālakhilya, bathe there at the confluence of Hiraṇyā (with Sābhramatī). By bathing there one's form certainly becomes golden. A mortal always obtains that fruit (by bathing) at the confluence of Hiraṇyā (with Sābhramatī) which is equal to the fruit of the gift of a thousand cows. And at Hiraṇyāsaṅ-gama the fruit is said to be infinite times more than the one obtained at the time of lunar or solar eclipse at Daśāśvamedha. Hiraṇyākṣa was a great demon. He practised severe penance (here). His body formerly became like gold there. When king Janamejaya bathed at that place, his (sin due to the) murder of a brāhmaṇa vanished. The royal sage Viśvāmitra came here for a bath. Having especially bathed here he went to my city. O chief goddess, brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras, who bathe here, go to Śiva's abode.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTYONE

Madhurāditya

Mahādeva said:

1-11. O goddess, then I shall, after the description of Hir-aṇyāsaṅgama, describe the holy place where the river Dharma-vatī joins (Sābhramatī). There is no doubt that a fortunate man bathing there goes to heaven. He who sees there the holy place fashioned by Yama is meritorious. Those who perform a śrād-dha there are free from the debt of their dead ancestors. Then

there is the Madhurā-tīrtha, which destroys all sins. One should bathe at Madhurā-tīrtha, and see Viṣṇu, the killer of Madhu. Here, Kṛṣṇa, full of the fear of Jarāsandha, had rested. After the murder of Kaṁsa demon had taken place, he, desirous of going to Kuśasthalī, lived for seven nights on the bank of Candanā, surrounded by Bhoja, Vṛṣṇi, Andhaka and Yādava heroes. He reached Madhurātīrtha and bathed as per rules. There Viṣṇu established (the image) by name Madhurāditya. He settled (there) eighteen thousand brāhmaṇas performing sacrifices, and left after giving them various vehicles. O chief goddess, there are thousands of holy places. One desiring the good of the dead ancestors, should perform a śrāddha there. "You who are staying in my holy place, should never be afraid of Jarāsandha." Having thus told those brāhmaṇas Kṛṣṇa went to Dvārakā. A man having bathed in that holy place, should worship Madhurārka. Due to the gift of a tawny cow on the seventh of the bright fortnight of Māgha, a man after enjoying pleasures here for a long time, would go to the position of the Sun.

12-23. O beautiful lady, listen, I shall tell you an ancient account, hearing which people are free from such sins as the murder of a brāhmaṇa. O goddess, on one occasion, the best sage Māṇḍavya practised very auspicious and severe penance at Gaṅgā-dvāra. He ate leaves and fruits and always ate (i.e. subsisted on) air. O goddess, day and night he was always greatly devoted to meditating on Viṣṇu. He was engaged in the practice of abstract meditation, and was always given to religious practices. O goddess, king Viśvamohana lived in that country. He had abundant wealth (consisting) of elephants, horses, chariots and foot-soldiers on the earth. His son, of auspicious marks, was Somacandra by name. O goddess, once he went for hunting in the forest. Having gone there, and having had the sports of hunting, he, surrended by his own people, amused himself. When he was engaged in sports, it was night, O goddess. During the night the king stayed in the forest for hunting. When the night passed, and when it was the period (of the day) called Brāhma, his horse was stolen by a wicked thief. Then there was a cry, 'Hā, hā' 'Where has the horse gone?' Then all of them desirous of going away and eager, through the fear of the king, said to

one another: "The horse is specially stolen by a thief." Looking for (it), they all came to Haridvāra. There the sage Māṇḍavya always practised penance. At that time the soldiers saw him lost in meditation: 'This thief, always a sinner, remains in meditation'.

24-32. Suspecting that he had come (there) after having tied the horse, the king's soldiers thought like that and seized the great sage They reported to the king about the thief, viz. the best sage. "O king, this snatcher of the horse is brought. O king, he is always a thief." Then he gave an order to transfix him on a stake. Then all the soldiers came together, and tied him. Then in a moment he was transfixed on a stake. He did not notice that act of being transfixed on a stake. Since he was engaged in abstract meditation and highly devoted to meditation on Viṣṇu, he noticed being transfixed on a stake after some time. "I am Māṇḍavya, the best of sages. Who has done this act?" The revered, omniscient one, who knew (the events of) the three times, thought: 'This must be the act of Dharma, and of none else'. Engaged in abstract meditation, the pious one went to Dharma. Having gone there, he spoke these (words): "O Dharma, listen now. You are always known as Dharma in the world and the Veda. How did you do the act of transfixing (me) on the stake? O sir, I certainly desire to know all that from you."

Dharma said:

33-39a. O best brāhmaṇa, listen to the cause of your fall in the previous existence. I shall tell (you) that. Please favour me. In your childhood you did this act—the sin—in your previous existence. O very wise one, listen to the cause of your fall in this existence. O brāhmaṇa, once you had gone to a solitary forest. O brāhmaṇa, having gone there, you put a living moth on a stake. Due to that act it was pained. O you of a good vow, due to that act, you were transfixed on a stake by the king. By all means (the effect of) an auspicious or inauspicious act done by one has to be undergone. You have undoubtedly suffered (the fruit of that) very small act. O best brāhmaṇa, be happy. Go at your will." Having heard these words, that best brāhmaṇa,

Māṇḍavya, with his eyes reddish due to anger then spoke (these words):

Māṇḍavya said:

39b-45. O most sinful one, O you of a bad conduct, what great sin had I committed, having done which, I was (thus) transfixed on a stake? Due to the wrath (contained) in my words, be a śūdra by all means.

After some time, he was born in the family called Candra, was known as Vidura, and was highly devoted to Viṣṇu. O chief goddess, for a pilgrimage he went to the river Sābhramatī, where there is (her) confluence with Dharmavatī. Vidura, of the form of Dharma, bathed there only. He certainly cast his śūdrahood in Dharmavatī. Therefore, O goddess, those meritorious men who bathe here, go to the highest position. Those men who offer a śrāddha and gifts here on the earth, get great prosperity in this world, and rejoice in heaven.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTYTWO

Kambutīrtha and Kapitīrtha

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-6. A man having bathed at Kambu-tīrtha, and having offered oblations to his dead ancestors, should worship Anāmaya Viṣṇu. By giving various gifts to brāhmaṇas according to the precepts he obtains Viṣṇu's heaven due to the efficacy of this holy place. O beautiful lady, formerly the intelligent royal sage Viśvāmitra, desiring progeny, especially practised penance here. He ate (i.e. subsisted on) air, fasted, and had air as his food. He was always intent on Viṣṇu's worship and engrossed in meditation on Viṣṇu. Due to this penance he obtained progeny. A man who desiring progeny, goes to Kambutīrtha, always obtains progeny, O you of a beautiful face. This is the truth and the (only) truth.

This is the greatness of Kambutīrtha.

7-13. Then, O best goddess, a man should go to the holy place Kapīśvara by name, which, the destroyer of great sins, is near Raktasiṁha. Formerly, during the war between Rāma and Rāvaṇa, when the bridge was being built, the monkeys took the best mountain and particularly fashioned the excellent holy place, Kapīśvarāditya by name. Here a man, after bathing and offering oblations to his dead ancestors and seeing Kapīśvarāditya is freed from (the sin of) killing a brāhmaṇa. Especially on Aṣṭamī a man should bathe there. Hanūmat and others bathed there on three days. I have told you this efficacy of Kapitīrtha. There is no doubt that a man, having bathed here and having worshipped Kapīśvara, becomes handsome and very fortunate. A man who desires strength or piety or a son in the world, would obtain all (that) due to the efficacy of Kapitīrtha.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTYTHREE

Ekadhāra and Saptadhārātīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-5. Then a man should go to the very purifying holy place (called) Ekadhāra. A man, having bathed at Ekadhāra and fasted for a night, and worshipping the master, the lord of gods, would emancipate a hundred (members) of his family. The bath here should be regarded as equal to (a bath in) Svāmitīrtha. Due to the efficacy of this holy place a man would go to Rudra's heaven. By bathing and drinking (water) here he goes to Brahmā's heaven. Those doing meritorious deeds in the three worlds, live on this bank. They do not have a fear that is due to the sword's edge etc. All that would quickly perish at this holy place Ekapradhāraka.

Thus is the description of the holy place Ekadhāra.

6-19. Then he should go to Saptadhāra, the best among sacred places, to which the sages have given the name Saptasārasvata. The great sage Maṅki made the Maṅkitīrtha in the Tretā age. In the Dvāpara age the sons of Pāṇḍu set up the Saptadhāra. The holy water that dropped from Śiva's matted hair had seven streams. All those seven auspicious forms of Gaṅgā which flow in the seven worlds are here in Saptadhāraka. The śrāddha offered at Saptadhāra gives satisfaction to the dead ancestors. O goddess, listen to an ancient account I shall tell, hearing which, O chief goddess, a man would certainly go to Brahmā's world. The son of Kaupītaka was well-known by the name Maṅki. He was always engaged in meditating upon Viṣṇu, and honoured Viṣṇu's men. He studied the Vedas, and was interested in maintaining sacred fire. In his house he had two wives: Sarūpā and Viśvarūpā. Seeing them childless he feared; worried as to what to do, he was very much thoughtful. 'Due to a son the family is stable. Otherwise the man would go to hell'. Thinking like this he never obtained pleasure. Then leaving his house, he went to the vicinity of his preceptor. "Salutation to you, O preceptor, who obliged gods. You are the lord of all the worlds, and protector of brāhmaṇas. You are the performer of sacrifices. O lord of brāhmaṇas, I salute you. O brāhmaṇa sage, I am sonless. O lord, what should I do? Tell me everything by which I shall certainly have a son. 'A sonless man does not at all get a good position in heaven. He should, by this or that means, beget a son'. Having remembered this statement I have come to you."

The preceptor said:

20-26. O best sage go there where the river Sābhramatī is. O best sage, having bathed there you will certainly obtain sons.

Having heard his words, and having saluted him (by prostrating himself) like a staff, the lord of brāhmaṇas went to Sābhramatī. The brāhmaṇa sage Maṅki, having gone there, then practised severe penance for fourteen years. There Maṅki, the teacher of Vedas, made in the Tretā age, a very wonderful holy place, O goddess. All that proved to be the giver of a son and as fulfilling his desires. Even till today there was or there will

not be a holy place like Maṅkitīrtha. That best brāhmaṇa Maṅki, having obtained sons comfortably, and having enjoyed pleasures of various kinds, went to my abode. This is a divine, pure, and very great account. By listening to it a man gets everything like sons and grandsons.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTYFOUR

Brahmavallī and Khaṇḍatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-10. O chief goddess, a man should then go to the great holy place (called) Brahmavallī. O best goddess, listen to the actual nature of that holy place. That Brahmatīrtha where the water of Sābhramatī joins the water of Brahmavallī, is said to be equal to Prayāga. By offering piṇḍas there the dead ancestors are gratified for twelve years—as this is the statement of Brahmā. Knowing that the religious merit due to a śrāddha offered there is equal to that of a śrāddha at Gayā, men offer it, and the dead ancestors would (thereby) be pleased. A gift particularly at Brahmavallī has religious merit equal to that due to the gift of a cow, of land or of food also. Here only Sanaka and others having bathed according to the precept, obtained Viṣṇu's world by meditating upon the position of the highest Brahman. O chief goddess, a man obtains particularly that fruit at Brahmavallī which he obtains by going to Puṣkara, (bank of) Gaṅgā, and the holy place Amarakaṇṭaka. Men obtain that fruit at Brahmavallī which (they get when) they give gifts at the lunar or solar eclipse, O chief goddess. Those who have divine forms and hold conches, discs and maces, also go to heaven on bathing (here), O chief goddess. A man, holding a rosary made of Tulasī(-wood), and remembering Viṣṇu, goes to the divine Vaikuṇṭha, the highest position (full of) bliss.

Thus is the greatness of Brahmavallī-tīrtha.

11-12. From there a man should go to Vṛṣatīrtha well-

known as Khaṇḍatīrtha. Having formerly bathed there the cows went to Goloka. The cows, the mothers of the world, that had fallen due to a curse were protected by Dharma in the form of Khaṇḍa; therefore it is called Khaṇḍatīrtha.

Pārvatī said:

13. Who formerly gave a curse to the cows, the mothers of the world? How did they fall from (their) world? How were they protected by Dharma?

Mahādeva said:

14-29. Formerly Vṛṣa, playing with the mothers in Goloka, discharged feces and urine. That fell on the head of Hara. So, due to their fault Hara gave a curse: "O cows, losing your intellect, you will go to the earth." The cows cursed by the lord, again went to Hara, and requested the god: "May we obtain (i.e. go back to) our world." "When you will bathe in the pool called Khaṇḍa near Brahmavallī at the holy place on (the bank of) Sābhramatī, you will certainly obtain heaven." Then the cows having bathed with the lord of cows in the pool, (became) most pure (and) went to heaven near Mahādeva. A man having bathed in Gohrada, and having offered oblations to his dead ancestors, obtains Goloka free from heat and destruction The man, who, living there without food, offers piṇḍas to cows, would obtain happiness as long as the fourteen Indras (rule). There is no doubt that a man obtains that fruit at Khaṇḍatīrtha which he certainly gets by the gift of a crore of cows. Taking a bull's urine, one who drinks the holy water gets purified at that moment only. There is no doubt about it. There was not and there will not be a holy place superior to Khaṇḍatīrtha. Those men, O best goddess, who go there, are meritorious. Having gone there, a man should worship cows, O best goddess. Then having bathed and being composed he should worship Vṛṣabha. Undoubtedly by worshipping him he would live in Goloka for a long time. Those men who, having gone there, particularly offer a golden (image of a) cow enjoy happiness as long as the fourteen Indras (rule). A man, who having fashioned (golden images of) ten cows gives them to a

brāhmaṇa at Khaṇḍatīrtha—that is said (to give) infinite fruit, O best goddess. Having gone there the wise should plant a pippala tree. Having done so, O chief goddess, he goes to the world of the dead ancestors. Those who plant five āmalakī trees, enjoy happiness in this world and go to Viṣṇu's world.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTYFIVE

Saṅgameśvara

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-16. Then (a man) should go to the great, excellent holy place called Saṅgameśvara, where the auspicious Hastimatī has joined Sābhramatī. Having received a curse from the sage Kauṇḍinya, the river became dry and came to be known in the world as Bahiścaryā. I shall describe to you that auspicious holy place, well-known in the world. It is auspicious, removes all sins, and is well-known in the three worlds. Having bathed at that holy place, and having seen Maheśvara, a man being free from all sins, goes to Rudra's heaven. O goddess, listen. I shall tell you the reason for this curse, due to which curse she became dry. At that place where that auspicious, great river Sābhramatī, named Gaṅgā (also) is, Hastimatī joined Gaṅgā. There the sage commenced a very severe penance. When so much time passed like this, the noble sage worshipped Nārāyaṇa Nirañjana (i.e. Viṣṇu). On her bank, O chief goddess, the sage particularly passed many years. O Pārvatī, sometime by chance the rainy season arrived. In course of time, O you of a good vow, the river was full (of water). Then at night the sage Kauṇḍinya abandoned that place. At night, he was very unhappy, and crying 'Hā, Hā', he wept piteously. Thinking what to do, he was very much anxious. The very divine hermitage with (i.e. occupied by) the sage, went (i.e. collapsed) into Sābhramatī, due to the flood, O best goddess. O beautiful lady, many fruits, roots, and even books, went (i.e. fell) into the river, due to the flood. That best sage Kauṇḍinya cursed the

river: "In the Kali-age you will be without water." Having thus given a curse to Hastimatī, O great goddess, the best brāhmaṇa went to the ancient heaven of Viṣṇu. Even today that holy place called Saṅgameśvara exists. Seeing that a sinner is freed from such sins as the murder of a brāhmaṇa.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTYSIX

Rudramahālayatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-8. O chief goddess, then a man should go to the holy place Rudramahālaya resembling Kedāra, and actually fashioned by Rudra. There he should offer a śrāddha causing delight to the dead ancestors. By offering a śrāddha there, the dead ancestors, along with the grandsires are gratified and go to the highest position of Rudra. He who lets loose a bull there in the great abode of Rudra on the full-moon day of Kārtika or Vaiśākha rejoices with Rudra. On drinking water at Kedāra, there is no rebirth. Having bathed here, a man undoubtedly enjoys liberation. O goddess, on one occasion, having left Kailāsa, I came to Sābhramatī, knowing her to be Gaṅgā for the well-being of the world. Having bathed there, and drunk (her water) and having made (the place) an excellent holy place, I then went to Kailāsa, my abode, O beautiful lady. Then the Mahālaya (the great abode) became a great holy place, and will be known in the world as Rudra-Mahālaya. Those who go to (i.e. visit) it on the full-moon day of Kārtika or Vaiśākha, do not have the misery due to the entire mundane existence.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTYSEVEN

Khaḍgatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-7. O goddess, listen to (the description) of the holy place, difficult to be reached even by gods. It is called Khaḍgatīrtha, and it desrtoys all sins. A man, having bathed at Khaḍgatīrtha, and having seen Khaḍgeśvara Śiva, would not meet with misery, (but) goes to heaven; (so also he) who sees the god Khaḍgdhāreśvara. One should especially worship (the god) there on the full-moon day of Kārtika. O dear one, this god, the lord of the universe, the lord of all, always gives everything in the world. He gives the desired objects. A man who, desiring a kingdom, sees the lord in Vaiśākha, gets that object quickly due to the grace of Viśvanātha. He should especially worship him with flowers, incense, eatables, or lamps, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain. So also with the offerings of fruits and bilva (-leaves). There is no doubt that wealth, grains, sons, grandsons, riches are obtained due to the worship of Śrī Viśveśvara.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTYEIGHT

Mālārkatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-9. On the bank of Sābhramatī is the excellent Gayā-tīrtha, called Citrāṅgavadana, auspicious and occupied by Mālārka. It is adorned with kalpa trees, santāna trees, and mandāra trees, and with mango, nimba, kadamba, kāśmarī, aśvattha and tinduka trees. Even by remembering it from a yojana leprosy would be cured. Mālārka would remove the leprosy of him who suffers from it. That woman whose child is dead, or who is barren, who bathes there according to the Vedic precept, soon obtains a son. The muttering (of a hymn), a sacrifice, self-study, worship of a deity done (there) by the Sun's devotee would be inexhaustible.

O chief goddess, having gone to this place a man should observe the vow of Śrī Ravi. Having enjoyed pleasures here, he goes to the Sun's world. A royal sage whose child was dead, went there and practised penance. The king obtained a son due to the grace of Śrī Mālārka. He who, particularly observing a fast, and with his senses controlled, would worship Mālārka, would certainly enjoy salvation. O best goddess, brāhmaṇas led by Vasiṣṭha and gods like Indra always stay at Mālārka near the Sun.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTYNINE

Candaneśvara

Mahādeva said:

1-11. From this holy place Mālārka a man should come to Candaneśvara, an excellent place of joy near Mālārka. Having drunk the blood of Duśśāsana, the very mighty Bhīma, fulfilled his very fierce pledge fully, and he tied Draupadī's hair with his hands smeared with blood, and having given (gifts to) brāhmaṇas, he went on a pilgrimage. With his brothers he went to the charming bank of Sābhramatī. That candana tree which was brought to Sābhramatī from heaven, had become a Phallus due to the power of the auspicious holy place. A man, by bathing there and drinking (water there) and gratifying his dead ancestors would not go to hell (but) would obtain Rudra's heaven. Then having seen Candaneśa, the lord of the universe and the cause of the well-being of the worlds, he should worship him according to his capacity; having gone there he does not repent. King Kaivartaka, having many times worshipped (the lord) here, went to that Śiva's world having gone where one does not regret. The sages bathe here; the ancient god, the highest soul Viṣṇu, causing welfare, always actually stays here. This Sābhramatī is blessed. Blessed is the lord, the ruler of the universe. O Pārvatī, here many holy places have come up on the earth. Here is Āmardakī with auspicious fruits of many kinds. O beautiful lady, respectful offering should be made there.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTY

Jambūtīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-14. From there a man should go to Jambūtīrtha, the destroyer of sins, for a bath, which has become like a staircase in the Kali-age. Here formerly Jāmbavat established on Daśāṅga—the best mountain—Phallus Ṛkṣarājeśa, worshipped by hosts of gods. When formerly Rāma killed the demon Rāvaṇa, Jāmbavat proclaimed with the sounds of drums 'Rāmacandra has won; Rāvaṇa is killed in the war. Sītā is (re-)secured.' Having proclaimed like this, he bathed in the auspicious holy place. O chief goddess, with his own name he installed a Phallus there. A man having bathed there and instantly remembering Rāma with his younger brother is honoured in Rudra's heaven. O goddess, wherever Rāma is remembered, there freedom from the bondage of the worldly existence is noticed in the mobile and immobile (world). I should be known to be Rāma, and Rāma as Rudra only. Having realised like this, O goddess, no difference exists between (Rāma and me). In every age they who mentally mutter 'Rāma, Rāma, Rāma', obtain all objects. O goddess, I always remember Rāma, having heard (the name of) whom, there would never be rebirth. O goddess, living in Kāśī, I always remember the lotus-eyed Rāma with devotion and according to the sacred precept. Formerly Jāmbavat remembered that very handsome Rāma, and installed the lord of the worlds known as Jāmbavat. Having bathed, eaten and worshipped the deity there, a man obtains (and lives in) Śiva's heaven till the fourteen Indras (rule). Merely by bathing here a man obtains strength like that of Jāmbavat due to the grace of Śrī Viśveśvara. A man who having gone here, makes a gift of land, gets a thousandfold fruit on seeing Jāmbavateśa.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTYONE

Dhavaleśvara

Mahādeva said:

1. A holy place superior to this is known as Indragrāma, having bathed where formerly Indra became free from a terrible sin.

Pārvatī said:

2. Due to which act did Indra acquire that terrible sin? How did he become free from that sin? Tell it (to me) in detail.

Mahādeva said:

3-19. Formerly Indra, the lord of gods, and Namuci, the lord of demons, mutually agreed to kill each other without a weapon. Due to being ordered by a divine voice, Indra took foam and killed Namuci. Then it was the murder of a brāhmaṇa. Indra asked Bṛhaspati the means of destroying the sin. And by the order of Bṛhaspati the lord of gods came to this place on the northern bank of Sābhramatī, and fashioned (there) a (holy) place. Due to his having bathed here he became free from the sin instantly. On his body was produced lustre white like the full moon. The killer of Vṛtra (i.e. Indra) installed the (representation of) the god (called) Dhavaleśvara. The Phallus is well-known in the world after Indra. When a śrāddha is offered on a full-moon day, a new-moon day, saṁkrānti (day), at an eclipse, the dead ancestors are satisfied for twelve years. He who, having reached Dhavaleśvara, would feed brāhmaṇas, for him, having fed one brāhmaṇa a thousand brāhmaṇas would be fed. A man should give (to a brāhmaṇa) gold, land, garments according to his capacity. A white milch-cow with a calf should be given to a brāhmaṇa. The muttering (of the names of) Rudra etc. which a brāhmaṇa would do after coming here, becomes a crorefold (in merit) due to Śrī Maheśa's grace. A man who would observe a fast etc. at this holy place, certainly is endowed with all his desired objects. There is no doubt about this. A man who, having brought bilva-leaves, worships the lord, obtains on the earth religious merit, worldly objects and sensual

pleasures. Dhavaleśvara will remove the disease and blemish of those best men who go (to this holy place) especially on a Monday. O goddess, I have not at all understood the greatness of those who especially offer worship to the lord on a Sunday. Those men who worship (the lord) here with a dūrvā, arka-flowers, white lotuses, (other) lotuses or petals, are meritorious. A man, having brought a flower of śvetārka and having worshipped Dhavaleśa, always gets his desired (object) by the grace of Dhavaleśa. In Kṛta (age) he was (called) Nīlakaṇṭha who always brought about the well-being (of his devotees). The revered lord was known as Hara in Tretā (age). In Dvāpara he was named Śarva, and Dhavaleśvara in Kali (age).

20-31. O chief goddess, listen to the old account in this regard. Formerly a vaiśya named Nandin lived in Indragrāma. Intent on meditating upon Śiva, he worshipped Śiva. There always stood in the penance grove, the Phallus called Dhavala. He to whom Śiva was dear, having got up everyday at dawn, was very much engrossed in worshipping Śiva. He was engaged in the worship (of the lord) with flowers according to the rite laid down in the holy texts. Once a greedy hunter, a killer of beings, a sinner of sinful acts, wandered on the bank of Sābhramatī, crowded with beasts of prey, and killed the deer with arrows. The hunter, the killer of beings, wandering like this, came, by chance, where the Phallus was well worshipped. He saw the Phallus—the well-known Dhavaleśvara, full of many wonders—well worshipped with many flowers and fruits. Having embraced the Phallus, he went to the bank of Sābhramatī. There he drank water and had his mouth full with water. With one hand he carried the flesh of deer, and in the other hand he carried bilva-leaves for worship. Quickly coming near the Phallus he struck with his foot the worship (offered by Nandin). All the flowers were scattered here and there. With the mouthful of water he bathed the Phallus. With one hand he offered the bilva-leaves for worship. With the other hand he offered the flesh of deer. With a salutation by prostrating himself he made a mental resolve.

32-48. 'From today I shall carefully offer worship. O Śaṅkara, from today you are my master, and I am your devotee.' Taking such a vow, the hunter came home. (When) in the morning

Nandin came to the temple, he saw all that the hunter had done. Seeing those misplaced (i.e. scattered) and impure things near Śiva, (and seeing) all those (things) disturbed by the wicked one, Nandin was anxious (thinking) 'what strange (thing) has today happened to me. Due to my ill-luck the obstacles that are told in the case of one who is engaged in Śiva-worship, have approached.' Having thus thought for a long time and having washed the Śiva-temple Nandin went home along the same way as he had come. Seeing Nandin dispirited, his family-priest said (these) words to him: "Why are you despondent?" Then to the family-priest Nandin said (these) words: "O brāhmaṇa, today I saw impurity near Śiva. I do not know who has done it there". Then the priest said (these) words to Nandin: "He who disturbed the worship of (i.e. offered with) flowers etc. is certainly a fool. He is dull-witted in what to do and what not. Therefore, O lord, you should not worry. In the morning go to the temple with me to catch the wicked one. I shall punish him." Hearing these words of the priest, Nandin remained at home at night with a pained mind. When the night Passed, he called the family-priest, and with the noble one Nandin went to the Śiva-temple. Having washed (the Phallus) he worshipped it with brāhmaṇas, covering it with many jewels and doing the five ways of homage. When Nandin was eulogising like this two watches passed. He (hunter), Great Death of that form and very strong, came there. He was of the form of death, very fierce, brave with a bow in his hand. Seeing him, Nandin being frightened, hid there. The family-priest also then bacame suddenly scared.

49-61. The hunter did there as before and without making any mistake he disturbed the worship with his foot and offered bilva-leaf. The hunter worshipped with the eatable of meat. Having fallen on the ground like a staff, he got up and went home. Seeing the great wonder, he (Nandin) thought for a long time along with the family-priest. Then he with his mind afflicted, asked the brāhmaṇas: "Tell the truth." All the brāhmaṇas together thought and spoke, according to the holy texts, to Nandin who had a fear: "Danger to the lord has come up. It is difficult to be warded off even by gods. Therefore, O best vaiśya, take the Phallus to your house." Agreeing to do so

Nandin uprooted the great (Phallus) of Śiva, brought it to his house and installed it in the proper manner. He fashioned a golden seat, well-adorned with fresh plantain-trees. With many offerings he worshipped (it). The next day the hunter came to the Śiva-temple. When he looked (for the Phallus) he did not see it. Breaking his silence he suddenly said these words with a wailing: "O Śambhu, where have you gone? Show yourself to me, today. If I do not get your sight I shall cast my despicable body today. O Śambhu, O Jagannātha, O Tripurāntaka, O Śaṅkara, O Rudra, O Mahādeva, show yourself (to me)." Having thus scolded Śiva with taunting (but) sweet words, the courageous hunter pierced, with a knife, his belly. Then having quickly pierced his arm he loudly and angrily said: "O Śambhu, show yourself (to me). Where will you go having abandoned me?"

62-70. With these words the hunter threw his intestines, and took out flesh from everywhere (i.e. every part of his body), and threw it suddenly with his hand into the pit (where the Phallus was). Having purified his heart, he plunged into Sābhramatī. Similarly having brought water and bilva-leaf, he quickly worshipped (the lord) properly, and fell on the ground like a staff. When the hunter remained in meditation near Śīva, then Rudra, surrounded by his attendants appeared there. He was fair like camphor, had braided and matted hair, and had the (crescent-moon) on his crest. Seizing him by his hand, and consoling him, Rudra said: "O brave one, O very wise one, O very intelligent one, you are my devotee. O devotee, ask for a boon which you have in your mind". Thus addressed by Rudra the very fierce (hunter) was full of joy. With great devotion he fell like a staff on the ground. Then he said to Rudra: "I do not ask for a boon. O Rudra, I am your servant, and you are my master. There is no doubt about this. Give this—the most praiseworthy (condition) in the world, in existence after existence. You are my mother, my father, my brother, my friend. You are my preceptor, a great hymn, always known through hymns."

71-78. Having heard the words of the hunter without (i.e. expressing) any desire, Śiva made him the chief of his attendants and his doorkeeper. Then the three worlds were resonant with the sound of small drums, so also with the sound of kettle-drums and of conches. Large drums then sounded, so also hundreds of

tabors sounded. Being amazed at hearing that sound Nandin quickly went to the penance-grove where Śiva was surrounded by his attendants. Then Nandin also saw the hunter, and the modest Nandī, full of amazement, said many words; he desired to praise the hunter with a great concentration: "You have brought here Śambhu; you are a devotee (of Śiva), and a tormentor of enemies. I who am your devotee, have come here. (Please) report me to Śaṅkara." Having heard those words of him, the hunter quickly held his hand and (with him) approached Śaṅkara. Revered Rudra laughed and said (these) words to the hunter: "Tell me who this one is, whom you have brought near the attendants."

The hunter said:

79-80. This is your devotee, so he is engaged in your worship. Everyday with gems, rubies and with diverse flowers, so also with his life and wealth you are undoubtedly worshipped. Therefore, O master, to whom your devotees are dear, know this to be Nandin.

Mahādeva said:

81-89. O you noble one, I know Nandin, living as a vaiśya. O very intelligent Mahākāla, you are my devotee and friend. Those best men who are not deceptive, whose mind is free from fraud – such distinguished devotees are dear to me.

Śambhu accepted the two as his attendants. Then there arrived many very bright aeroplanes. That very lustrous, excellent hunter emancipated the excellent vaiśya. The two reached Kailāsa-world in very speedy aeroplanes, and obtained absorption into the magnanimous god. Girijā (i.e. Pārvatī) waved lights before the two attendants as before her sons, and the goddess with a stately elephant-like gait laughed and spoke: "O Mahādeva, there is no doubt that they are (dear to me) as you are. You are identical, have same gait, similar laughter and well honoured." Hearing those words of the goddess, the hunter and the vaiśya also instantly turned away their faces, and in the presence of Śaṅkara the two attendants quickly

spoke: "O Śiva, you should pity both of us. We shall always stand at your door. We repeatedly salute you."

90-100. Lord Śiva, knowing their sincerity, spoke to them with great attachment: "May you get your desired object." Since then the two have become doorkeepers (of Śiva). O goddess, they remain at Śiva's door, and see him at mid-day. One is Nandin, (the other is the hunter) Mahākāla. The two are dear to Śiva. Those sinners, irreligious men, blind men, dumb men, crippled men, who are abandoned by their families, the wicked men, and men like cāṇḍālas, or men of whatever types, who have gone (back) after having worshipped Dhavaleśvara, will also go (to Śiva). No doubt should be raised in this case. A bath (taken) here, and a gift (given) here (lead to the) proximity of Śaṅkara. Those who have bathed in Sābhramatī and have worshipped Dhavaleśvara, go to Rudra's heaven. No doubt should be raised in this case. Those best men who bathe and give gifts here, enjoy moral merit, worldly prosperity and sensual pleasures and go to Śiva's abode. A man certainly obtains that fruit which he gets (by bathing etc.) on the day of the lunar or solar eclipse, and on the (death) anniversary day of his dead ancestor. The desire-yielding cow everyday comes there by all means. And having come (there) she Properly worships god Śiva. O best goddess, she undoubtedly goes to heaven. Due to the contact with that milk (of her), the Phallus is whitened. Since then its name has always come to be Dhavaleśvara. O goddess, the beings that die there being urged by Death, go to the position of Śiva (and stay there) as long as the moon and the sun (remain in the sky).

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTYTWO

Bālāpendratīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-11. On the bank of Sābhramatī is the holy place, best among the holy places, known as Bālāpa, which gives enjoy-

ment and salvation. The holy place is supported by ascetics and is the resort of the wise. There a maiden, of a very strong vow, practised a severe vow. She, the virtuous one, matchless in beauty on the earth, was the daughter of the sage Kaṇva, was an unmarried religious student named Bālāvatī. With many restraints the beautiful girl observed the vow of Sāvitrī with the resolve: 'The Sun should be my husband'. Devoutly observing those restraints very difficult to practise, she passed ten years on the bank of Sābhramatī. By that vow of her, penance, and devotion, the lord was pleased; and due to that abundance of her devotion, god Divākara (i.e. the Sun) came to the hermitage. The large-hearted one entered (the hermitage) after taking the form of a brāhmaṇa sage. Seeing the brāhmaṇa, the best due to his penance, the best among those who knew the Vedas, she honoured him in the manner of an anchorite. She, the auspicious devotee of the Sun, said to the ascetic: "O revered best sage, O lord, what is your order? I shall give you everything according to my capacity except my body. I am the Sun's devotee. I shall never give you my hand. O ascetic, by means of vows, restraints and austerities I have to propitiate the Sun, the lord of the three worlds."

12-23. When she spoke like this, Bhāskara, smiling and observing her who remained in the vow, spoke to her as it were consoling her: "O auspicious one, you are practising a severe vow, very difficult to practise. O maiden, your undertaking is as it should be. Everything is obtained by penance. Everything subsists in penance. O good one, by means of penance godhead, so also salvation, is obtained. O fortunate one, take these five badara-fruits from me." Giving her the badara-fruits, and telling her "Cook (these)" the Sun left. He, of a great glory, taking the form of a brāhmaṇa, left that auspicious one, and waited not far away at Indragrāma without being seen by her. The Sun desiring to know her devotion remained as a brāhmaṇa. Bhāskara (i.e. the Sun) fashioned a grove of badara trees. Then the restrained girl, with the palms of her hands joined, and free from fatigue, resorted to (i.e. took) fire to cook the badara fruits. O goddess, the great one, very lustrous, cooked the badara fruits. O chief goddess, very long time passed when she was cooking (them). A great heap of ash formed

there, and the day came to a close. A great heap of wood was burnt by the fire. With a desire to please the brāhmaṇa, she, after washing her feet, put them into the fire, looking charming, and burnt them for the badara(-fruits). O sinless one, again and again burning her feet, she held them up. Seeing that act of her, the Sun was pleased. Then he manifested his form to the maiden; and being very much pleased, he spoke to the girl of a severe vow:

The Sun said:

24-32. O girl, I am pleased with your devotion, penance and observance of the vow. Therefore, O girl, may your desired object be accomplished. Endowed with penance, you will stay in my abode at this holy place. This excellent holy place will be known by your name.

It is known as Bālāpa. It stands on the bank of Sābhramatī. It is well-known in the three worlds, and was formerly praised by brāhmaṇa sages. A pure man who stays at Bālātīrtha for three nights and having bathed at sunrise looks at the reddish Sun, goes to the Sun's heaven. No doubt should be raised in this matter. On a Sunday, or on a Saṅkrānti day, especially on the seventh, during the Sun's equinoctial passage, so also on the lunar and solar eclipse day, he should bathe and gratify gods, dead ancestors and grandsires. Then he should give a cow made of jaggery to brāhmaṇas, and rice mixed with jaggery. Those men who worship the reddish Sun with karavīra and japā flowers, live in the Sun's world. A man should give a red cow and a bull also. That man obtains the fruit of a sacrifice, and would not go to hell. A sick man is free from his disease, and a man that is bound becomes free from bondage. By offering piṇḍas at this holy place, grandsires are pleased.

Mahādeva said:

33-45. O ascetic lady, like this there is another greatness of this holy place. Listen to an old, great account, narrated by Vyāsa. Formerly there was an old buffalo disabled due to old age. He was unable to carry loads. (So) the trader abandoned him. In the summer he went to the great river to drink water.

Due to (ill) luck, he plunged into the mud and died. Due to the glory of this holy place his bones were washed away into the holy water. He became (after rebirth) the son of the king of Kānyakubja, and remembered his former birth. Remembering his own account, and the great glory of the holy place, he came (there), and after bathing (there), gave many gifts. He installed there (the representation of) Maheśvara, the god of gods. A man having bathed at this holy place, having worshipped Mahiṣeśvara, and having seen the red Sun, is freed from all sins. The water of Sābhramatī, which flows there from the east to the west, is holier than even that at Prayāga, is great, and fulfils all desires. The gifts given here to best brāhmaṇas, the oblations offered into fire here, the śrāddha offered here, and the muttering (of a hymn done) here would be inexhaustible. (By giving) the gift of a cow, land, sesamum seeds, gold, garments, grains, a bed, a seat, a vehicle, an umbrella, a man obtains whatever object he desires. Due to the grace of Śrī Maheśa and the glory of this holy place, this holy place Bālāpendra is auspicious, and always removes sins. Seeing it the sages are always free from attachment. There the holy place named Mahiṣa (and) Śveta gives great religious merit. O chief goddess, having bathed there a man is not reborn. O goddess, there is no doubt that a man gets that fruit (by bathing) at this holy place, which a man gets by bathing in Godāvarī.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTYTHREE

Durdharṣeśvara

Mahādeva said:

1-6. I shall (now) describe another excellent holy place Durdharṣeśvara, by merely remembering which even a sinner would become meritorious. When the war between gods and demons had taken place, and when the demon had died, Uśanas (i.e. Śukra), the son of Bhārgava, had observed here a vow difficult to practise, had propitiated Mahādeva, not easily

accessible and the cause of the world, and obtained the formula (called) Mṛtasañjīvanī (bringing the dead back to life) from Śiva, for the demons. It is well-known in the world. A man who has bathed at Kāyatīrtha and worshipped Maheśvara called Durdharṣeśvara, is freed from all sins. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, in this respect listen to an old account. Formerly when the battle between Vṛtra and Indra took place, the gods were vanquished by the demons. Indra, the lord of gods, thinking what to do, went to Bṛahaspati.

Indra said:

7-8. You are our preceptor. You are always actually the guardian of gods. You are famous, the best of sages. O treasure of kindness, favour me. I am vanquished by Vṛtra, O you of a good vow, where shall I go?

Bṛhaspati said:

9-12. O lord of gods, listen. I shall tell you (that) by which you (will) always (be) happy. If you desire your well-being, then do as I tell you. Go to Sābhramatī, and having gone there be happy. The god called Durdharṣa, causing well-being, always dwells there. O lord of gods, he gives desired objects. This is the truth and the truth only.

Having heard Bṛhaspati's words, he went to that river. Having bathed there, the lord of gods worshipped that Maheśa. Due to the bath and worship Śrī Maheśvara was pleased.

Mahādeva said:

13. I will always give every object that you desire.

Hearing (these) words, the lord of gods said (these) great (i.e. important) words:

Indra said:

14-15. You are the lord of all the worlds. You are the cause and the (highest) position. You are always perceived by me to be god Viśveśvara. O Viśveśvara, O master of gods, if you are pleased, then, O Mahādeva, kill Vṛtra. This is my great desire.

Mahādeva said:

16-17. O lord of gods, at your words, this Vṛtra is (i.e. will be) killed by me. O lord of gods, take the weapon which will be given by me. Due to its contact with (his) life, you will certainly kill him.

Indra said:

18. O lord of the universe, what is that missile with which I shall kill Vṛtra? What is that which you have fashioned as superior to the thunderbolt? When have you fashioned it?

Mahādeva said:

19-23. This is the Pāśupata missile which I have formerly fashioned. It was not given to anyone (else). O Indra, I have preserved it for you. O god, you have bathed here and worshipped (me) here. Therefore, take this weapon from me, with which you will kill Vṛtra.

Due to Śrī Maheśa's favour, Indra obtained it; and with that he killed the very mighty Vṛtra. All that took place here by the grace of Durdharṣeśa. That was secured merely by a bath and worship, O goddess. It was secured due to the glory of the holy place. O beautiful lady, this is the truth and the (only) truth. Realising this, O chief goddess, a man should bathe there. Seeing Mahādeva destroys all sins.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTYFOUR

Khaḍgadhāreśvara

Mahādeva said:

1-5. On the bank of Sābhramatī is a very great purifying secret holy place. Known as Khaḍgadhāra, it will be concealed in the Kali age. A man who happens to bathe here and drinks water here occasionally, is freed from all sins and is honoured

in Rudra's heaven. Here that meritorious, auspicious Sābhramatī, following Kaśyapa, and going to the nether world, was held in his matted hair by Rudra. Rudra, with the name Khaḍgadhāra, dwells there only. O chief goddess, sinners having bathed here, have gone to heaven. In this case they narrate this old account about the very difficult vow practised by a mountaineer.

Pārvatī said:

6-7. What was the name of the mountaineer? Which vow did he practise? I desire to hear all that. Tell it to me properly. O best among speakers, there is none else but you. Therefore, O god, tell me all that (as) it is beneficial to hear.

Mahādeva said:

8-22. Formerly there was a very fearful, wicked (man) named Caṇḍa. He, the cruel one, was a rogue, was of a bad conduct, and fearful to beings. The wicked one constantly killed the fish with a net. He would cause to fall down deer, beasts, black antelopes and porcupines, so also many kinds of birds and pierce them with spear. The angry one killed birds and especially peacocks. The fowler was very sinful, wicked, and dear to wicked people. His wife was of that sort(only)—unchaste and suffering from severe diseases. When he was amusing himself like this, much time passed. Once the sinful one remained on a bilva tree at night with a bow in his hand to which an arrow was fixed to kill a boar. Thus he, without winking his eyes, passed the night. Even though he was angry, he cut off (i.e. plucked) many leaves of the bilva tree on the Caturdaśī of the bright half of Māgha, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain. Those (leaves) fell on the Phallus that was at the root of that bilva tree through (his good) luck. All that became the worship of Śiva. By throwing mouthfuls (on the Phallus) the ignorant, wicked fowler gave it a grand bath. That wicked fowler became free from sins at the time of moonrise in the bright half of the month of Māgha. His impetuous wife devoid of hope and without food, also came near him—i.e. at the place where the fowler remained. He had not secured any hog, or deer or buffalo (as his hunt). So that woman had brought (for him)

food to eat. He saw his impetuous, cruel-eyed wife coming (to him). That wife of him fell into water—into a river. Just then she said to Caṇḍa: "Come on, eat quickly the flesh of fish that I have now brought for you. O fool, what did you do the previous day? Flesh is not seen by your side. You have ruined your family (as) it (will have to) fast (now)."

23-31. Having heard these words of Caṇḍā, he of a fierce form, had become one of a pure heart due to the Śivarātri-fast and keeping awake at night. He of a pure vow (went) to the river to bathe. When the wicked one was bathing, a dog came there. O chief goddess, the dog ate all that flesh there. Caṇḍā was very angry, and approached the dog to strike him. Then that angry Caṇḍā was warded off by Caṇḍa: "Do not hit him. What evil has he done?" She said: "This wicked one has eaten the food. O fool, what will you who are hungry, eat today?"

The mountaineer said:

I am pleased with (the fact) that the dog has eaten the food. What is the use of this transient and infirm body? O passionate woman, those who with full sincerity nourish their bodies, should be known as sinners, outcast from both the worlds. Therefore, giving up pride, passion and wickedness be composed by considering the truth; and be steady with the knowledge of the truth. O you beautiful lady, with the vow of Khaḍgadhāra I shall today abandon this my body. What is the use of my living long?

32-36. Saying so, when he drew his sword and (was about to) cut off his head, many attendants prompted by Śiva came (there). Many aeroplanes also came near him. The mountaineer having seen those aeroplanes and the attendants also, spoke with great devotion to them: "Why have all of you, wearing (rosaries of) rudrākṣa, come (here)? All of you resemble crystal; all of you have the crescent moon on your crests; all of you have braided and matted hair; you have your garments covered with hide; you have adorned yourselves with the necklaces of serpents' hoods. You are endowed with majesty. Your valour is like that of Rudra. O tell me the proper truth." The attendants of Rudra, asked at that time by the mountaineer, spoke:

The attendants said:

37-41. O Caṇḍa, we are sent by Śiva, the highest lord. Accompanied by your wife, come quickly, and get into the carriage. Due to the effect of the act, viz. your having worshipped the Phallus on Śivarātri, you have obtained the highest position.

Thus addressed by Vīrabhadra, he, laughing a little said: "What meritorious act have I, a sinful, foolish, wicked mountaineer, interested in hunting, done? I am always acting sinfully. How shall I live in heaven? Tell (me) how I have today worshipped the Phallus. I, having a great curiosity, am asking (you). Please tell (it to me)."

Vīrabhadra said:

42-47. O Caṇḍa, Mahādeva, god of gods, called Gaṅgādhara, lord of Umā, is today pleased with you and with your wife. Today you did what was proper for the occasion and worship also. While looking for a boar, O Caṇḍa, you plucked the bilva leaves; they fell on the top of the Phallus at that time. Therefore, O lord, you are meritorious. On the great (bilva-) tree you certainly kept awake. Due to that keeping awake the lord of the universe was pleased. Under the pretext of watching the boar, O glorious hunter, you observed a fast on the Śivarātri day, though by chance. Due to that fast and keeping awake the magnanimous best god was pleased. The very dignified giver of boons gives all boons to favour you.

48-53. Thus addressed by the intelligent Vīrabhadra, the mountaineer also got into an excellent aeroplane, while the attendants, deities and all beings were watching. At that time large drums, kettle drums and musical instruments sounded. There were the sounds of lutes, flutes, tabors, with dancing and acting. Chief gandharvas sang, and bands of celestial nymphs danced. He, being fanned with chowries, and with various umbrellas (held over his head), was taken with great ceremony near Śiva. Even the mountaineer reached (Śiva) due to a bath at a holy place and worshipping Śiva. Then what to say of those men who in this world offer flowers etc., fruits, sandal,

tāmbūla and sacred grains with faith and devotion to Śiva, the highest soul? They are Rudras. There is no doubt about this.

Mahādeva said:

54-57. Since then that holy place is well-known as Khaḍgadhāra. O chief goddess, in the Kali age, it will be hidden. O you daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, those who bathe (here) in the month of Māgha or Vaiśākha, and especially on the full-moon day of Kārtika, are released. Vasiṣṭha, Vāmadeva, Bharadvāja and Gautama come here to bathe and to see god (Śiva) the Trident-holder. The Phallus remained there in the (first) three ages. O Pārvatī, it does not remain (there) in the Kali age. At that time the sage Viśvāmitra had cursed me.

Pārvatī said:

58. I certainly desire to hear from you, O lord of gods, how that curse was pronounced upon you by the sage.

Mahādeva said:

59-72. O goddess, on one occasion the great ascetic Viśvāmitra came to this very wonderful sacred place, Khaḍgadhāra. Having bathed in the Sābhramatī, he paid me visit. Worshipping (me) in various ways he always remained there. O beautiful lady, there was at that time a very wicked hunter of a sinful form. He put flesh on (the Phallus of) Śiva. Seeing that flesh (there) again, Viśvāmitra then said: "Oh! the sinner has done a wicked deed. The highest soul, Śiva, has not punished him: Therefore, I shall, having determined, certainly curse him." Having thought like this, he then cursed me, O goddess. "In this terrible Kali age you will remain completely hidden." Having thus cursed me, that best sage left. Since then, O goddess, due to the sage's curse, I am hidden. If they especially offer a worship at my place, their sin perishes at that moment only. Those who having fashioned a clay image of me worship it, especially live at this place of (i.e. sacred to) me. In this Kali age it is called Khaḍgadhāreśvara. In Kṛta (age) it was (known as) Mandira; in Tretā (age) it was known as Gaurava. In Dvāpara (age) it was known as Viśva, and Khaḍgeśvara in

Kali (age). O chief goddess, my place lies on the southern side. Knowing this, a wise man, fashioning (my) image there, worships (it) everyday. He would obtain the desired fruit. The man obtains, on the earth, religious merit, worldly prosperity, sensual pleasures and (ultimately) salvation. O chief goddess, there would come no misery to those who offer incense, light, articles of food, so also sandal etc., to Maheśvara, the lord of the worlds; this is the truth, the (only) truth, O beautiful lady.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTYFIVE

Dugdheśvara

Mahādeva said:

1-4. To the south of Khaḍgadhāra is a highly purifying holy place called Dugdheśvara, which destroys all sins. One who bathes and sees Śiva (called) Dugdheśvara at this holy place, gets instantly relieved of the pain due to sin. Dadhīci practised penance at the auspicious bank of Sābhramatī since it is meritorious as Candrabhāgā has joined Gaṅgā there. Everything like a bath, gifts, muttering (of hymns), worship and penance (done) there, becomes inexhaustible by the power of Dugdhatīrtha.

Pārvatī said:

5. O lord, I desire to hear about the origin of Dugheśvara. O lord of gods, tell (me about) the greatness of Dugdhatīrtha.

Mahādeva said:

6-26. Formerly in the war between gods and demons gods were defeated by demons. Intent on fleeing they came to Dadhīci's hermitage. Having abandoned their weapons there only, the gods went to the ten directions. Then having heard the uproar of the demons, Dadhīci Bhārgava, after having submerged the weapons in water, drank them. After (some) time the gods, eager to take the missiles, (came there) with Bṛhas-

pati. In the hermitage serpents sported with mongooses with pleasure. Seeing many such wonders in that hermitage, all the gods were very much amazed. At the place where the auspicious Sābhramatī has joined Candrabhāgā, they saw the excellent sage seated on a seat shining with great lustre like the sun, accompanied by fire and by his wife Suvarcā. All the excellent gods saw after salutation the best sage like Brahmā with Sāvitrī. Then the gods led by Bṛhaspati said: "It is already known in the three worlds that you are a donor. We have approached you with a request. All of us are full of fear. Please give us our missiles." The best, very intelligent sage, thus addressed, said to the gods: "O gods, submerging them with a hymn, I drank them (up)." Then the gods said to the brāhmaṇa: "To kill the demons quickly give your bones." The brāhmaṇa said, "(Here) they are given." Speaking like this to them he sent his wife to the hermitage. Then the delighted, very intelligent brāhmaṇa smiled and said to the gods: "O gods, I have drunk them. Take them (back) properly." Saying so, O goddess, the brāhmaṇa, proficient in abstract meditation resorted to it. Then with deceitful words the gods said to the smiling brāhmaṇa: "O brāhmaṇa, how can we get them as long as you are alive?" The brāhmaṇa sage laughed and said: "Wait for a moment. O gods, I myself shall abandon my body today." Speaking like this, O goddess, that brāhmaṇa, proficient in abstract meditation, resorted to it, and instantly went to heaven, whence he does not return even today. Then all the hosts of gods, seeing him dead, thought: 'How shall we cut up (his body)?' Then Indra called Surabhi and said to her: "By my words lick up the body of the best brāhmaṇa." Saying "all right" and honouring his words, she licked it at that moment only. The cow instantly made that body fleshless. Gods took those bones, and fashioned weapons (with them). The missile (made) from his backbone was Brahmaśiras.

27-40. Having fashioned weapons and missiles, the very powerful and brave gods, intent on destroying Vṛtra, quickly went (to him). Then Suvarcā, Dadhīca's wife, who was sent for the accomplishment of the mission of gods, having come (there) saw her dead husband and (his) body cut up. The chaste lady, knowing that entire deed of the gods, was angry. Then Suvarcā,

the very angry wife of the excellent sage, pronounced a curse: "O very wicked gods, you were cursed many times, and (yet) you are greedy. Therefore, may all of you with Indra, be childless from today." Thus she spoke. That female ascetic thus cursed the gods. Sitting at the root of the aśvattha tree, she stayed on the bank of Sābhramatī. That pregnant chaste lady cut off her belly. From her womb the child of noble Dadhīca came out. That great lord Pippalāda was actually the incarnation of Rudra. The mother Suvarcā laughed, and said (these) important words to the child Pippalāda: "Live near this aśvattha tree, O illustrious one, and be auspicious to all." Talking just like that to her son, that chaste lady Suvarcā went to her husband through profound meditation. Thus that wife of Dadhīca followed her husband to heaven. Those gods, having fashioned the weapons and missiles, who were very powerful and brave, who were led by Indra, and who were eager (to fight) came to the demons. The desire-yielding cow poured out milk at the place where the brāhmaṇa (Dadhīca) had perished. By the power of the sage the milk became of the form of a Phallus. O goddess, it is known as Dugdheśvara (situated) on the bank of Sābhramatī. Since then the holy place is well-known on the earth by that name. Its greatness is matchless, and destroys sins merely by being heard. Those men too, who devoutly listen to the (greatness of) Dugdheśvara, getting free from sins, go to the great position of Rudra.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTYSIX

Candreśvara

Mahādeva said:

1-15. To the east of Dugdheśvara where the river named Candrabhāgā has joined (Sābhramatī), there is a highly purifying holy place. There god Candreśvara, always giving religious merit dwells. He is Śiva who is always all-pervading and who, the great one, gives happiness to people. Those who always

bathe and meditate here, would get the fruit of that due to worshipping Śiva on (the bank of) Sābhramatī. Soma (i.e. the Moon) practised penance here for a long time. Therefore, (the Phallus of) Maheśvara called Candreśvara was installed here. Śukra also practised penance near Candrabhāgā. Therefore, the holy place is superior to (other) holy places on the earth. O chief goddess, the Phallus fashioned by the sages is concealed in Kali(-age). Undoubtedly a golden Phallus is seen there. Those men who, coming here, bathe and drink (water) and worship Śīva, obtain religious merit and worldly prosperity. Those who especially do the act of giving a bull etc. enjoy (in) heaven, and then go to Śiva's abode. O goddess, those men who will everyday come for a bath near Candrabhāgā, should be known as meritorious. Those men who go to the other bank and worship Śiva, Śrī Hara, named Candreśvara who cuts off sins (are meritorious). Those best men who, having come here, especially do the muttering (in honour) of Rudra etc., should be known to be of the form of Śiva. O best goddess, those men who always bathe here, should be known to be Viṣṇu's forms. There is no doubt about this. Those who again offer here a śrāddha with sesamum-piṇḍa, also go to Viṣṇu's position due to the efficacy of the offering of the piṇḍa. Here gifts should be given and a bath should be taken according to the proper rite. Having bathed here men are absolved of (the sins) like killing a brāhmaṇa. Those who especially plant a fig-tree on this bank, go, after death, to Śiva's position (and stay there) as long as the Moon and the Sun (remain there in the sky).

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTYSEVEN

Pippalādaṭīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-5. Near Dugdheśvara there is a charming, highly purifying, holy place, well-known in the world by the name of (i.e. after) Pippalāda. Formerly the sage desiring acquittal from

the debt of his father, the noble Dadhīca, practised penance here, and by the words (i.e. the order) of his mother, he produced a Kṛtyā[1] (i.e. a fearful female deity) resembling the submarine fire. A man having bathed and drunk (water) here, destroys (the sin of) the murder of a brāhmaṇa. Pippalāda, the lord of gods, is concealed on the bank of Sābhramatī. O goddess, by bathing there a man would enjoy salvation. The planting of fig trees should be done properly. Having done this, O great goddess, a man is free from the bondage of his deeds.

Pārvatī said:

6-7. Explain to me why that Kṛtyā was produced. O lord, tell me what that Kṛtyā did formerly. Which son brought her for the acquittance of the debt of his father?

Mahādeva said:

8-11. That excellent sage Dādhīca (i.e. Dadhīca's son) came (here) for (practising) penance. The great-souled sage practised a great (i.e. severe) penance here. A demon named Kolāsura came there to create an obstacle. He certainly caused many obstacles. That was noticed by his (i.e. Pippalāda's) good son, the intelligent Kahoḍa. O chief goddess, for the destruction (of the demon) he produced the Kṛtyā there. She killed the great demon named Kola. Therefore, O Pārvatī, the holy place is concealed in Kali(-age).

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTYEIGHT

Nimbārkadevatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-11. Next to Pippalāda is an excellent holy place called Picumandārka on the bank of Sābhramatī, destroying disease

1. Kṛtyā: A female deity to whom sacrifices are offered for destructive and magical purposes.

and bad odour. Formerly in the war with (the demon) Kolāhala, the demons vanquished gods. (Being) subtle, they entered trees with a desire for (saving) their life. There Śambhu remained in the bilva (tree), the immutable Viṣṇu in aśvattha, Indra in śirīṣa, and god Sun in nimba (tree). Thus the gods properly remained like that in the trees. Till the powerful Viṣṇu killed the demon Kolāhala, they remained resorting to the trees. The god that resorted to a particular tree, became one with it. Therefore, one should not destroy it. Thus due to the Sun's taking rest (here), Picumandārka is an excellent holy place which removes a disease after a man takes bath in it, and which is on the bank of Sābhramatī. After going there, if a man would especially worship the Sun, he gets the desired fruit by worshipping (him). Those men who after having gone there, recite the twelve names, are meritorious till they live. There is no doubt about this. An intelligent man who would recite these twelve names, viz. Āditya, Bhāskara, Bhānu, Ravi, Viśvaprakāśaka, Tīkṣṇāṁśu, Mārtaṇḍa, Sūrya and Prabhākara, so also Vibhāvasu, Sahasrākṣa and Pūṣan, obtains, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, wealth, sons and grandsons.

12-14. A brāhmaṇa who, resorting to (i.e. reciting) each name would worship (the Sun) on the earth, would be endowed with wealth and mastery of the Vedas for seven existences. A kṣatriya obtains a kingdom. A vaiśya would get wealth. A śūdra secures devotion. Therefore, a man should recite (this) great hymn. There never was, nor there will be, a holy place superior to Nimbārka; having bathed and drunk (water) here a man would certainly enjoy salvation.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTYNINE

Koṭaratīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-13. A little away from it is the excellent Siddhakṣetra, O goddess. Formerly Aniruddha was chosen by Citralekhā for

Uṣā. He was taken to Bāṇāsura's city formerly and he stayed in his (i.e. Bāṇāsura's) house. Checked by nooses and arrows, he then remembered Koṭarākṣī. She is actually the power of Viṣṇu, always engaged in protecting (the devotees). Kṛṣṇa installed (the image of) this goddess here on the bank of the river. Due to the hymn of Aniruddha, returning to Dvārakā, after having vanquished Bāṇāsura in a battle, she actually came near (him). A man having carefully bathed for one year at that holy place, and having seen Koṭarākṣī's face, obtains much wealth. A man bathing at Siddha-tīrtha, and seeing (the goddess) living at Koṭara, is honoured in Rudra's heaven (after being taken) in a vehicle of (i.e. to which) lions (are yoked). O beautiful lady, even by remembering her, he too is freed. Therefore, those men who go here, enjoy salvation. A man, after having gone there, should especially bathe, and should deliberately recite the hymn of Koṭarākṣī, O Pārvatī. Koṭarākṣī has a universal form. She has great divine power. She is superior in strength. She in Tripurā, is the destroyer of Tripura; is Śiva and of the form of Śiva. She is said to be the daughter of Sarasvatī. She is Durgā. She removes misery. She is Bhairavī, Bhairavākṣī, and Lakṣmī, to whom the people (i.e. devotees) of the goddess are dear, O Chief goddess. Thus various names (of her) are mentioned. Those who recite them go near Śiva. O beautiful lady, those wise men who mutter the hymn composed by Aniruddha, get freed from troublesome bondage. This is the truth, and the (only) truth. The holy place fashioned by Koṭara on the earth is best among holy places. Merely on seeing it the heaps of sins (of a man) perish.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTY

Vāmanatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-5. A holy place superior to this holy place is well-known as Tīrtharāja. Here seven rivers with their water mixed with

sandal flow. A bath here is especially a hundred times superior (i.e. more meritorious) to one at any other holy place. Here, Vāmana (i.e. Viṣṇu), the greatest among gods, himself dwells. He who, on the Dvādaśī of the month of Māgha would give a cow made of sesamum, is free from all sins, and would emancipate a hundred (members) of his family. A devout man, who would give here even water mixed with sesamum-seeds to the dead ancestors, has (indeed) offered śrāddha for thousand years. The dead ancestors say this. If a man feeds brāhmaṇas at this holy place with jaggery (and) sweetened milk, then, when one brāhmaṇa is fed, a thousand would be fed (by him).

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTYONE

Somaṭīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-7. A man (then) should go from there to Somatīrtha which is hidden on the bank of Sābhramatī. Bhava having come out from the nether world, became Kālāgni there. When a man bathes at Somatīrtha and sees Someśvara Śiva, he undoubtedly obtains the fruit of drinking Soma. The man becomes handsome, fortunate, enjoys (pleasures), is proficient in all sciences in this world, and would go to Śiva after death. O beautiful lady, in this matter I shall tell you an old account; listen to it; hearing it one is free from the sins like that of the murder of a brāhmaṇa. Sage Kauṣītaka especially practised a penance. He gave up food, and was very much engaged in eating leaves (only). Then he subsisted on air and was devoted to meditation on the self. Thus for many ages he practised severe penance there. Some time, fortunately (for him) Maheśvara was very much pleased. "O brāhmaṇa, I shall (give) you all that you ask for."

Kauṣītaka said:

8-11. O lord of gods, let a Phallus spring up here by your grace. Let there certainly be here the god called Someśvara,

Having bathed and eaten here, may a man obtain his desired fruit. If the best men especially mutter hymns of Rudra etc. at this place, they obtain religious virtue and worldly objects. A sonless man gets a son, and a poor man obtains wealth. One desiring a kingdom undoubtedly gets that kingdom. O lord, if you are pleased, give all that to me.

The lord said:

12-17. Then the lord of gods gave everything to the twice-born. Since then the holy place is well-known as Somaliṅga. Those who worship Sadāśiva with sandal or bilva-leaves, obtain happiness due to the birth of a son etc. in the human body (i.e. existence). Similarly, he who, on a Monday, goes to Śiva's temple, always gets his desired objects due to the grace of Somaliṅga. O goddess, having gone there, with whatever desire a man offers a fruit etc. all that desire is surely fulfilled. Those who worship god Śrī Maheśa, Pinākin with karavīra flowers or pārijāta flowers, obtain, O best goddess, the best position of Śiva.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTYTWO

Kapotatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-7a. Thence, O goddess, one should go to Kāpotikatīrtha where the water of Sābhramatī flows to the east. That man who always offers a piṇḍa there, after dedicating it to his dead ancestors, and along with wild fruits and flowers on every parvan day, and who offers portions of food to the crows, dogs, etc., would very happily cross over Yama's path. A man having bathed at that sacred place with white mustard seeds on the full-moon day of Vaiśākha, should worship the excellent deity Prācīneśvara. He would emancipate himself, his dead ancestors and grandsires. Here a pigeon, having gladly offered himself to a guest, was praised by hosts of gods who had gone to heaven

in aeroplanes. Since then the holy place is known as Kāpota. Having bathed and drunk (water) there, a man removes (the sin of) the murder of a brāhmaṇa.

Pārvatī said:

7bc. O lord, tell me, how the pigeon offered his body. What was the cause? O lord of gods, I do not know (all this).

Mahādeva said:

8-18. O chief goddess, at this holy place there is a great fig tree. Its innumerable large branches are seen on the ground. Many beings lived there, so also birds. O chief goddess, a pigeon had built his house (i.e. nest) there. The lord of birds, always greatly devoted to Viṣṇu, verily lived along with his family on its branch. O goddess, once on the Dvādaśī day, the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, a hawk came there as a guest, O beautiful lady. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, he said: "O pigeon, give me the flesh of your body. Otherwise I shall curse you. To-day on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, I, oppressed with hunger, have come (here). Therefore, O lord give the flesh to me who am afflicted with hunger." O goddess, the pigeon, a great devotee of Viṣṇu, having heard the words of the falcon, offered his body without hesitation. O best goddess, due to the power of the gift this place became a holy place called Kāpotaka, which is a great holy place and is the (most) purifying among the purifying places. O best goddess, a man who, having bathed here and worshipped Śiva, offers desired food to guests, enjoys happiness in this world and goes to the eternal (place) of Viṣṇu. The pigeon, having offered his body to the noble one went to the heaven of Viṣṇu (and will live there) as long as the Moon and the Sun (are there in the sky). Therefore, O goddess, having gone there, a man should always worship a guest. Having worshipped a guest there, he certainly obtains everything.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTYTHREE

Gotīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-5. The best holy place among the holy places is the well-known Gotīrtha, destroying great sins and situated near Kāśyapa-pool. There is no doubt that whatever sins, like the murder of a brāhmaṇa, are there, they perish on bathing at Gotīrtha. Cows that had become dark due to some former sin, again became white on having bathed at that sacred place. Having bathed there, a man on offering grass etc. to cows, is free from the debt of Mātṛs by the grace of the cow-mothers. A man who, having gone to and bathed at Gotīrtha, gives a milch cow to chief brāhmaṇas, goes to the position of Brahmā.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTYFOUR

Kaśyapatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-9. O chief goddess, here there was another holy place called Kaśyapa, where there was a great pool made by Nāgadeva. The god named Kuśeśvara shines there; so also there is a charming pool fashioned by Kaśyapa. O goddess, a man having bathed there would not go to hell. O great goddess, brāhmaṇas maintaining the holy fire and devoted to the daily recital of the Veda and very learned, live on (the bank of) Kāśyapā. As is Kāśī, so is this city built by sages. Kaśyapa practised severe penance here, and brought Gaṅgā springing from the matted hair of the lord. O goddess, that Gaṅgā is (called) Kāśyapī, destroying great sins, merely seeing which men are freed from a wicked sin. They recommend (here) the gift of a cow, so also the gift of a chariot. Having performed a śrāddha a man should, with effort, give a gift there. A holy place destroying a great sin like Kaśyapa was never there, nor will be there, in the

fearful Kali age. O chief goddess, all deities and sages with their sins vanished, always remain (here) by the grace of the chief of holy places.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTYFIVE

Bhūtālaya, Ghaṭeśvara, and Vaidyanāṭha

Mahādeva said:

1-5. From there a man should go to the holy place Bhūtālaya which is a place removing sin. A fig tree called Bhūtālaya and (the river) Candanā (flowing) towards the east are there. A man who, having bathed at Bhūtālaya observes a fast on the Kṛṣṇāṣṭamī, and offers black sesamum, is not born as an evil spirit. He who offers a pitcher of water with sesamum, dedicating it to the dead ancestors, frees them from the state of an evil spirit. The man by uttering whose name a man bathes is freed from the state of an evil spirit. A man should bathe in the pure water at the holy place of Bhūtālaya and should see the fig tree called Bhūtālaya. By the grace of Bhūteśvara he would not have fear from evil spirits.

This is (the description of) Bhuteśvara-tīrtha.

6-8. A holy place superior to this is known as Ghaṭeśvara. Having bathed there and seen him, a man would surely enjoy salvation. There is that great holy place on the (bank of) Sābhramatī, (known as) Ghaṭa. Having seen Mahādeva there, a man is liberated. There is no doubt about it. The man who, having gone there, especially worships the fig tree, secures on the earth desires entertained by his mind.

This is (the description of) Gaṭeśevara-tīrtha.

9-10. Thence a man should devoutly go to the holy place well-known as Vaidyanātha. A man, having bathed at the holy

place and engaged in worshipping Śiva, and gratifying his dead ancestors, would obtain the fruit of all sacrifices. Vijaya, born from the god, and destroying all sins (is there), seeing whom a man always gets his desired objects.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTYSIX

Pāṇḍurāryā-tīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-8. A greater holy place than Vaidyanātha, giving all kinds of supernormal powers and best of all holy places, is said to be excellent. Dharma's son, having powerfully taken a tax from Bibhīṣaṇa, the lord of demons, commenced the great sacrifice Rājasūya. When the southern quarter was conquered (i.e. regions of the south were conquered), Nakula, Pāṇḍu's son installed with great devotion Pāṇḍurāryā, giving enjoyment and salvation. A man, having bathed in the water of the Sābhramatī and having saluted Pāṇḍurāryā, obtains the eight superhuman (yogic) powers like the one of becoming as small as an atom[1] and great intelligence. No doubt should be raised in this case. If a man with a pure mind salutes Pāṇḍurāryā, it should be regarded by those who know the truth, to be a worship offered for a year. A man, having cast his body near Pāṇḍurāryā at that holy place, reaches the peak of Kailāsa and would be an attendant of Caṇḍeśvara. Formerly, Hanūmat practised there a very difficult penance. Due to the prowess of the holy place, the power to jump over the ocean was produced (in Hanūmat).

1. Aṇimā—One of the eight supehuman powers or siddhis. The eight powers are: (1) Aṇimā—The power of becoming as small as an atom. (2) Laghimā—The power of assuming excessive lightness at will. (3) Prāpti—The power of reaching anything e.g. touching the moon with a finger-tip. (4) Prākāmya—Irresistible will. (5) Mahiman—The power of increasing the size at will. (6) Īśitva—Superiority, greatness. (7) Vaśitva—The power of subduing passions. (8) Kāmāvasāyitva—Suppression of desires.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTYSEVEN

Caṇḍeśa, Gaṇatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-2. The holy place superior to this holy place is known as Caṇḍeśa, where god Caṇḍeśa, giving prosperity, dwells perpetually. Having seen him a man is freed from the sin done through ignorance. All the deities coming together erected a city. O great goddess, it is known by the name Caṇḍeśa.

This (is the description of) Caṇḍeśa-tīrtha.

3-8. A holy place superior to this is Gāṇapatya well-known on the earth; it is fashioned near Sābhramatī (bank), O goddess. Having bathed there, O goddess, a man is released; there is no doubt about it. I think all the holy places on the earth including the ocean, abandoned (their places) and came to this verywonderful holy place for the good of the people. A man of a pure heart who has controlled his senses, performing a śrāddha there, obtains the fruit due to all sacrifices. Whatever is offered after dedicating it to the dead ancestors at the Gaṇa-tīrtha, all that is reqained quickly by the grace of the Lord of Gaṇas. A man, having bathed at the holy place, should give a bull to a brāhmaṇa; he, going beyond all the worlds, would go to the highest position.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTYEIGHT

Vārtraghnīsaṅgamatīrtha

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-4. Thence, O great goddess, a man should go where Vārtraghnī has joined Sābhramatī and where Śakra got a contact with that auspicious one. Men with their minds controlled bathe there. A man, bathing there, would obtain that fruit which

is that of ten horse-sacrifices. A man who performs a śrāddha there, (and offers) piṇḍas of powdered sesamum, purifies seven preceding and seven succeeding generations. A man after bathing at the confluence and worshipping Gaṇanāyaka, is not overcome by dangers, and is not abandoned by glory.

Pārvatī said:

5-6. Please tell (me), to commence which mission Indra had come to this world from heaven; so also what is the etymological explanation (of the name of) the river Vārtraghnī. Tell me also about the confluence which continuously makes the city of Indra full of the sound (made) by gods and brāhmaṇas.

Mahādeva said:

7-15. In this world, this question had come in old days. There was a great, righteous, well-known king Yudhiṣṭhira. He asked righteous Bhīṣma who was but knowledge incarnate. I shall tell you what he had said, O goddess. The thrilling war between Vṛtra and Indra took place for ten thousand and ten hundred years. Then, Indra who was defeated, entered into an agreement with Vṛtra and abandoned the proceeding, and sought my shelter, O innocent one. On the auspicious confluence of Vārtraghnī (with Sābhramatī), he pleased Śaṅkara (i.e. me), O goddess. I then appeared to him in the sky. From the ash that fell from my body on the bank of Kāśyapī, a Phallus named Bhasmagātra was fashioned. Brahmā has installed Bhūteśvara, Bhasmagātra. Merely by its sight, (the sin of) a brāhmaṇa's murder would perish. Having performed a śrāddha there (a man) gets freed from all sins in the (various) ages. Then I was very much pleased with the veay noble Indra. (I said to him:) "O god, I shall give you all that you desire. By means of this thunderbolt you will quickly kill Vṛtra."

Indra said:

16-20. O best god, in your very presence I shall kill the unconquerable son of Diti, by your grace.

Saying so, Indra went to (i.e. marched against) the demon. At that time drums sounded, especially in the army of gods. Tabors, small drums, kettle-drums, musical instruments (were sounded) in

many ways. All the demons had a great longing for existence. In a moment Indra became powerful. Seeing him intent (on killing Vṛtra) the sages and serpents praised Indra, the lord, with the praise: "Be victorious, be victorious." The form of that Indra going near (Vṛtra), desiring to fight, and being praised by the sages, was quite unbearable.

Mahādeva said:

21-37a. O goddess, hear from me the marks that suddenly appeared in Indra's body in the battle. He was fearful with his mouth blazing; there was great paleness; his body was much trembling; his breath became hot. There was severe horripilation; breathing was heavy. Very fearful meteors fell; and vultures, hawks, herons crying fearfully, came near him, and revolved like a wheel round him. Then that Indra, mounted upon an elephant, came there. Indra, with his hand holding the thunderbolt raised, approached the demon. That lord of gods gave out a superhuman cry. Indra dropped the thunderbolt on the demon Vṛtra who was exerting. The thunderbolt was great, very bright and resembled the destructive fire at the end of the world. Indra knocked down Vṛtra on the shore of the ocean. Then all around there was a great sound; Seeing Vṛtra fearful to all gods killed, a large shower of flowers fell on Indra's head. Then the lord, having killed the fearful lord of demons, being praised and accompanied by gods, entered his capital. Then from Vṛtra's body an excellent lustre came out. It was Brahmahatyā (i.e. the embodied form of the sin due to a brāhmaṇa's murder), that was very fierce, fearful and scaring the worlds. Her face was terribly deformed, black and tawny. She wore a string of skulls, was very emaciated, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain. She was smeared with blood, most sinful, smelling like fish, and very dreadful. O great goddess, O best goddess, having moved out, she having a form like that and fearful, then looked for Indra. Running out, she, on seeing the very lustrous Indra seized him by his neck, and clung to it at that time. Confounded due to the fear caused by that Brahmahatyā he hid in a lotus-fibre, and remained there for many hosts of years. Seized by her, he became motionless, O goddess.

Indra tried to destroy her. (But), O great goddess, he was not able to destroy her.

37b-42. Due to being seized by her, Indra, reduced to an undesirable form, went to Brahmā, and worshipped him with his head (bent down). Knowing that Indra was seized due to the sin of the murder of an excellent brāhmaṇa (viz. Vṛtra), Brahmā then thought, O best goddess. She, thinking of Brahmā, approached Brahmā and spoke (these) words to him: "O revered god, O you who cut off the pride (of the arrogant), I have approached you. Please tell me what I should do, O god." "O young lady, release this king of gods. Do what is dear to me. Tell me, what I should do for you today. What desire do you have?"

Hatyā said:

43. O best man, by your words, I shall go away from Indra. O god of gods, salutation to you. Give me an abode. You, desiring the preservation of the worlds, have set this limit.

Mahādeva said:

44-45. Having promised that Hatyā like that, the grandsire thought of a means to remove Indra's sin due to a brāhmaṇa's murder. Then calling Fire, Brahmā spoke (these) words: "O Jātavedas, accept the fourth portion of (the sin due to) a brāhmaṇa's murder."

Agni (Fire) said:

46. O lord, what is the cause of my release, when this murder of a brāhmaṇa is done? I like to know this properly (from you), O you who are worshipped by the worlds.

Brahmā said:

47-53. Brahmahatyā will just then abandon you, and shall live in that man who, finding you blazing, does not offer into you seeds, herbs, sesamum-seeds, roots, sacred fuel and darbhas. O Havyavāha, let your mental torment go away.

Then Fire accepted it, and the revered grandsire obtained what was dear to him. O noble one, then having called trees,

herbs, grass the grandsire started speaking (words of) this import: Then the trees, herbs, grass somehow said: "All right." They, afflicted like Fire, spoke (these) words to Brahmā: "We being told about Brahmahatyā are naturally killed. Therefore, please do not kill us again. O god, we always suffer fire, cold, rain urged by wind, so also being cut and broken."

Brahmā said:

54. This (Brahmahatyā) will go after the man who will cut or break you without any reason.

Mahādeva said:

55-57. Then the noble, great herbs and grass said, 'Yes', and after worshipping Brahmā also, they went as they had come. O best one, then the grandsire, having called the celestial nymphs, and comforting them with sweet words said (to them): "O you excellent ladies, this Brahmahatyā has come from Vṛtra. Accept her fourth portion as told by me."

The celestial nymphs said:

58. O grandsire, the time of the release of us who, by your order, have decided to take (the fourth portion of Brahmahatyā), should be thought about.

The grandsire said:

59. She will quickly come to the man who copulates with women in their menses. Let your mental torment go away quickly.

Mahādeva said:

60-63. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, the bevies of the celestial nymphs, with their minds delighted, then said, "All right", went to their respective places, and rejoiced. Then the grandsire, the god—the author of the worlds—thought of waters, and they arrived. O goddess, all of them, having come to Brahmā, of unlimited lustre, and having saluted the grandsire, said (these) words: "O god, O you who curb your enemies, O lord of gods, here we have come by your order. So order us what to do."

Btahmā said:

64. This dreadful Brahmahatyā has come to Indra from Vṛtra. Accept the fourth portion of her.

The waters said:

65-66. O lord of the worlds, let it be as you say. You will please think about the time of our release. O lord of gods, you are the highest recourse of the entire world. Which favour from others can there be, that will emancipate us from peril?

Brahmā said:

67-68. She will quickly go to that man and stay in him only, who having a small mind, and with his intellect deluded, will throw phlegm, urine and feces into you. Then you will be liberated. I am telling you this truth.

Mahādeva said:

69-71 Then, O chief goddess, Brahmahatyā left the lord of gods, and went (away). The lord of gods became very much delighted due to the direction of the god (i.e. Brahmā). In the former age, Indra met (i.e. faced) Bramahatyā. Having practised penance here, and with his mind purified, he went to heaven. Then having performed a horse-sacrifice, he became sinless. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, such is (the importance of) Vārtraghnī at the holy place (on the bank) of Sābhramatī.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTYNINE

Varāhatīrtha

Maheśa said:

1-6. Then the divine river after her confluence with Vārtraghnī, has entered with Bhadrā into the ocean, the abode of Varuṇa. The ocean also, having come there with a desire to do what is dear to her, and due to his affection for Sābhramatī,

brought about the pleasing union. Bhadrā who was the friend of Subhadrā formerly, actually taking the form of Śrī, helped her on the way. Their confluence on the northern shore of the ocean is meritorious. A man who, after bathing (there) offers pure water, after saluting Varāha, would obtain Varuṇa's place. Lord Viṣṇu entered the ocean along that path, vanquished all the demons, the enemies of gods, then the god, Yajñavarāha, agitated the ocean, sported there, for a very long time, and came out through Kardamāla.

Pārvatī said:

7. O god, tell me in detail the entry of Yajñavarāha into the Sābhramatī and his exit through Kardamāla.

Mahādeva said:

8-11. I shall tell you about this sport of Viṣṇu (in the incarnation of) Varāha, in the interior of the earth, done formerly. O daughter of the Himālaya Mountain, listen. He who is actually the lord, took up the form of a boar. Having taken up the form for the success of the mission of the gods, the lord of gods, holding the divine earth (on his tusks), came out of the place (called) Kardama. O beautiful lady, a great holy place has come about there. A man who bathes there, enjoys salvation. There is no doubt about this. A man should perform a śrāddha here for the release of his dead ancestors. Freed with them, he goes to the great world giving happiness.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY

Saṅgamatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-5. A holy place superior to this holy place is called Saṅgama. Here that Sābhramatī Gaṅgā has joined the ocean. A man should bathe and give gifts there. Having bathed here,

even those who are great sinners, get salvation. One desiring the good of his kinsmen, should offer a śrāddha there. When a śrāddha is performed here, the man would certainly live in the world of the dead ancestors. At that place where god Sāgara (i.e. the divine Ocean) always joins Gaṅgā, (even) the murderer of a brāhmaṇa is freed. Then what to say of other sinners? When dull-witted men do not know about the holy place there, then a holy place in my name should be fashioned.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTYONE

Ādityatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-4. Near the confluence is a good holy place (Sattīrtha) well-known in the world, called Āditya. There was not and there will not be a holy place superior to it. One should visit it, and bathe. Worship should be done with a blue lotus, an arka flower and also with karavīras. Men should always perform a śrāddha and offer gifts there. This Ādityaka-tīrtha is pure and destroys sins. This holy place gives religious merit even to great sinners who visit it.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTYTWO

Nīlakaṇṭha

Mahādeva said:

1-4. A holy place superior to that holy place is well known as Nīlakaṇṭha. One desiring salvation should always visit it. By (offering) bilva-leaves, incense, lamps and on seeing Nīlakaṇṭha a man gets the desired object. In a secluded place he

(i.e. the deity) highly devoted to fasting, always dwells. He gives to people whatever they long for. O great goddess, that Kāśyapī is well-known in Kali (age).

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTYTHREE

Durgāsaṅgamatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-6. One should bathe there where that river Sābhramatī has joined Durgā and the ocean, O goddess. (Such men) become free from blemishes in this Kali age. There is no doubt about this. A man should perform a śrāddha at the confluence of Durgā. Having gone there, one should especially feed brāhmaṇas and offer (them) cows, buffaloes. This (river) is blessed, most blessed, pure and destroyer of sins, seeing which, O goddess, a man is freed from sins. This river Sābhramatī should be known as Gaṅgā. O goddess, in the Kali age she especially gives fruits for a long time. Even if there were hundreds of tongues in my mouth I shall not be able to describe her merits.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTYFOUR

The Rise of Nṛsiṁha

Mahādeva said:

1-4. O goddess, listen to a vow difficult to be had in the three worlds, having heard about which men are free from sins like the murder of a brāhmaṇa. The becoming visible of the self-manifested one is for the happiness of the devotees. A day or a group of days has become meritorious. O goddess, he, by uttering whose name a man gets eternal salvation, is the highest

soul, and the cause of causes. He is the universal soul; has the form of the universe; the revered one is the lord of all. That Nṛsiṁha, the noble one, who has held twelve suns, has become manifest with a desire for the good of (his) devotees.

Pārvatī said:

5. O best god, innumerable incarnations are enumerated. O master, O lord of the universe, tell me about the greatest abode called Nṛsiṁha, by merely knowing which one would obtain a world (full) of happiness.

Mahādeva said:

6-7. Prahlāda, the best among the wise, spoke (these) words to the best one who had killed his father, and who, after killing Hiraṇyakaśipu, was seated comfortably, and on the lap of whom, the god of gods and the lord of world, Prahlāda was seated.

Prahlāda said:

8-9. Salutation to you, O revered Viṣṇu having the wonderful form of Nṛsiṁha. O greatest god, I am your devotee; and am really asking you. O lord, in me unbroken devotion is produced in many ways. Tell me, O lord, how (i.e. why) I have become dear to you. (Tell me) its cause.

Nṛsiṁha said:

10-13a. O very wise one, I shall tell it to you. Listen with a concentrated mind, the cause of your devotion and of your being dear (to me). In olden times you were born (as the son) of a brāhmaṇa. You did not study. You, Vasudeva by name, were addicted to prostitutes. Greedy for the company of prostitutes, you enjoyed honey and ghee, and did not do any good deed in that existence. Due to the power of my vow, devotion (for me) in you was produced, O sinless one.

Prahlāda said:

13b-14. O lord of gods, tell me in detail, what was the vow and of whose son? What bad deeds did I, addicted to a prostitute, do? Favouring me, now tell all that (to me).

Nṛsiṁha said:

15-27. Formerly Brahmā observed this excellent (vow) for the sake of creation. Due to the power of my vow he created the mobile and the immobile. God (Śiva) observed this vow for killing Tripura. Due to the power of this vow Tripura was knocked down. Many other ancient deities, sages, and very wise kings practised this excellent vow. Due to the efficacy of this vow all got success. They became dear to me. Having enjoyed many pleasures in heaven, they merged in me. O Prahlāda, enter me: since for (some) mission you had a form separate from my body. Even after hundreds of kalpas, they will not be reborn. A poor man obtains wealth like that of a rich man. One desiring an object will get it; one desiring a kingdom will obtain an excellent kingdom; one desiring a (long) life will get it (as long) as that of Śiva. It makes women free from widowhood; gives sons and prosperity. It brings about wealth, grains, and destroys grief. To those women or men who practise this excellent vow I give happiness, and the fruit of enjoyment and salvation. What is the use of talking much about the fruit of this vow? Neither I nor Śaṅkara is able to tell the fruit of my vow.

Prahlāda said:

O revered one, by your favour I have heard (about) this excellent vow; have heard about the fruit of this vow. Now I desire to hear about the cause of my devotion for you, and the excellent manner of this vow. O lord, in which month and on what day would it take place? O god, please tell it in detail, (tell also about) the manner, having performed in which, one would obtain its fruit.

Nṛsiṁha said:

28-33. O child Prahlāda, listen attentively to the vow. One should observe it on the Caturdaśī of the bright half of Vaiśākha. It should be observed with my manifestation, giving me pleasure. O son, listen to my becoming visible for the happiness of my devotees. For (some) other reason, this pure holy place, destroying sins and known as Maulistāna, came up in the

Western direction. In that holy place (lived) a well-known brāhmaṇa, master of the Vedas, Hārīta by name, and highly devoted to knowledge and meditation. O lord, his wife was very meritorious and always of virtuous nature. Her name was Lilāvatī and she was always under the control of her husband. O son, for a long time they practised a severe vow. Surely twenty-one yugas passed (while they were practising penance). Then at that holy place the lord appeared in person before the two.

Nṛsiṁha said:

34-46. O brāhmaṇa, I shall undoubtedly give you whatever you desire.

Then the two said to him: "If a boon is to be given to me, then let a son like you be (born) to me now only. "O son", I had then said, "I am certainly your son. But as I am eternal, I shall not remain in the womb. I am the Creator of all beings; I am actually the Supreme Spirit, and greater than the great; since I am eternal, I shall not stay in the womb." Then Hārīta said: "Let it certainly be so." Since then I have stayed at (this) holy place for my devotee. The best devotee, after coming here, should see me. I shall always destroy his entire suffering. And for this reason to those best men who observe this vow in the proper manner, there is no fear. A man who meditates on and worships him in a child's form especially along with the two, at night, would become Viṣṇu. He should always worship him, having four arms, large fangs, of the nature of Death, and unassailable, resembling a crore of suns, and unconquerable for a crore of Yamas; (he should always worship him who has a face like that of a lion, and has the body of a man, who is Nṛsiṁha, a divine lion, and of the nature of Death. Knowing this in particular, he would go to my place, and would observe the vow which is very pure, which gives a large mass of wealth, which undoubtedly gives the devotees salvation in the end, and which, being practised gives the fruit of a thousand Dvādaśī (vows). My vow should be observed on a Saturday when the Sun is in conjunction with the Svātī constellation,

when there is the siddhiyoga[1] of Planets and in a division of the day[2] (a karaṇa) known as Vaṇija. Knowing that this my day destroys crores of Hatyās, is associated with all auspicious conjunctions of stars, destroys sins (he should observe the vow). He who would pass my day (without the vow) is a sinner.

47-61. He who does not observe it goes to hell (and lives there) as long as the Moon and the Sun are (in the sky). When the day of (i.e. sacred to) me has arrived, O child, my devotee, after brushing his teeth and having subdued his senses, should (declare) before me the intention to observe this vow: "Today I shall practise your vow. Make it free from difficulties." He who observes the vow should not talk wicked words etc. Then at mid-day, with the accompaniment of a Vedic hymn, the wise one should bathe in pure water in a river etc., at home or in a natural pond or an auspicious lake. For the appeasement of all sins, he should bathe in the proper manner (after smearing his body) with clay, cowdung and dhātrī-fruit, so also with sesamum seeds. After putting on two auspicious garments, he should begin the daily rite. Then having smeared his house, he should draw an auspicious octagon. Having placed on it a pitcher with jewels, he should put on it a vessel full of rice. Then having fashioned, according to his (financial) capacity, my golden image along with that of Lakṣmī, he should install them there. Then having bathed them with (the collection of five sweet things called) pañcāmṛta[3], he should invite a brāhmaṇa preceptor, not very greedy, and knowing the holy texts; keeping him in front (i.e. in his presence) he should worship the deity. He should erect there a pavilion adorned with bunches of flowers. And with flowers of the season, I should be worshipped in the proper manner. Then I should be worshipped in the sixteen ways of doing homage to a deity, with hymns and restraints. Then I should be especially worshipped with the Purāṇic hymns. He who would then offer sandal with camphor, mixed with thick saffron and flowers of the seasons, so also Tulasī-leaves to Nṛsiṁha, becomes free. There is no

1. Siddhiyoga—A particular auspicious conjunction of Planets.
2. Karaṇa—A division of the day. These Karaṇas are eleven.
3. Pañcāmṛta—A collection of five sweet things used in worshipping deities. They are: milk, sugar, ghee, curd and honey.

doubt about this. He should offer incense of kṛṣṇa agaru, always dear to Viṣṇu, to the preceptor and to Viṣṇu for accomplishing all his desired objects. A great lamp, destroying the darkness of ignorance should be offered. Then he should wave the great light with the sound of bells. "O lord of Lakṣmī, I am offering you eatables, sugar along with articles of food and meal. Destroy all (my) sins." This is the hymn for offering of eatables:

62-73. "O Nṛsiṁha, Acyuta, Deveśa, on this auspicious day of your birth, I, giving up all enjoyments, will observe a fast. O lord, be pleased with that. Keep away (from me) a sinful existence." With the sounds of songs and musical instruments, he should keep awake during the night. Everyday a Purāṇa containing stories about Śrī Nṛsiṁha should be read. Then, in the morning after having bathed he should, gratifying me, worship me in the manner told before. With his mind steady, he should make an offering to Viṣṇu before me. Then gifts, to be told hereafter, should be given to worthy brāhmaṇas for winning (i.e. enjoying) both the worlds. The golden (image of) the deity pleases me. He (also) gives a cow, land, sesamum-seeds, gold etc. to a brāhmaṇa. A bed along with a mattress filled with cotton and with seven (kinds of) grains should be given. Other (articles) also should be given to his capacity. He should not indulge in dishonesty with regard to wealth, with the desire for the fruit as mentioned (before). Then he should feed brāhmaṇas, and give them good presents. Even the poor should observe (this vow) according to their capacity. All the castes are entitled to (observing) my vow. It should be especially observed by my devotees highly devoted to me. Then (follows) the hymn containing the prayer: "O lord of gods, emancipate from the painful ocean of the mundane existence those men who are born in my family and also those men who will be born therein. O you lord of the world lying on Śeṣa, give the support of your hand to me who am plunged in the ocean of sins, overcome by diseases and beings moving in water, and who am in a great misery. O lord of gods, by means of this vow, give me enjoyment and salvation."

74-97. Having thus appealed to the deity, and having dismissed the deity in the proper manner, he should offer all the

presents etc. to the preceptor. Having pleased the brāhmaṇas with presents etc. he should dismiss them. Engaged in meditation upon me, he should eat with his relatives. He who, though poor, certainly fasts (on) the Caturdaśī, certainly gets freed from sin committed during (the previous) seven existences. He who would devoutly listen to (the account of) this vow, would remove the sin (even) of the murder of a brāhmaṇa by merely hearing it. A man who would narrate this pure, great secret, would obtain all his desired objects. That is always the fruit of this vow. He who, according to his capacity, observes this vow at the time called madhyāhna (mid-day) and would, with great devotion, worship Līlāvatī along with the sage (Hārīta) and Śrī Nṛsiṁha also, would obtain eternal salvation. He who, having gone to that holy place, would worship Śrī Nṛsiṁha, obtains his desired fruit due to the grace of Śrī Nṛsiṁha. "O Śrī Nṛsiṁha, O you of a great form, O you unconquerable for a crore of Deaths, O Bhairaveśa, O Hara, O you destroyer of misery, O you of the form of a child, salutation to you. Salutation to Śrī Nṛsiṁha of the form of a child, and to the child, to the all-pervading, to Sunanda, to him manifesting his own form, of the nature of all beings, to the lord of all, of the nature of the heaven. Salutation to you, O ocean of pity, dwelling in the orb of the Sun, of the form of twenty-four, and of terrible fire at the time of the deluge, to Nṛsiṁha, fully of the form of the world. That god Nṛsiṁha, conqueror of Vīrabhadra, held the very much heated orbs of twelve Suns on his forhead." There is especially very auspicious and charming Sindhu river. O beautiful lady, near her even now there is a city, always known as Maulistāna, and fashioned by gods. There is the residence of the noble Hārīta. Līiāvatī also certainly stays there only. There would be an echo near the river Sindhu. But when Kali age has arrived, many sinful mlecchas certainly live there. If a man loudly utters the word 'Nṛsiṁha, Nṛsiṁha', like the word 'Nṛsiṁha' which, great and wonderful, came up at the time of the birth of Nṛsiṁha, then, O you daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, a similar echo is produced. Those men—a killer of a brāhmaṇa, one who has stolen gold, a drunkard, or one who has violated one's preceptor's bed (i.e. his wife)—after having gone to Sindhu, and bathed in her (water), are

undoubtedly liberated by the grace of Śrī Nṛsiṁha. Those men who stay there for ten nights, should be known to be of meritorious acts. (These) my words are not false. Those castes, led by brāhmaṇas, that stay there in the Kali age, should be known to be like the mlecchas, cast out of the fold of the Vedas by the best gods. They ate flesh there, and always drank liquor; therefore, they are certainly irreligious and most sinful. O chief goddess, like brāhmaṇas not performing sandhyā, they, outside the fold of the Vedas, live there in the West. Only one sacred place called Nṛsiṁha, is very extensive, having heard about which a man is undoubtedly free from sins.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTYFIVE

The First Chapter of the Gītā: The Anecdote of Suśarman

Pārvatī said:

1-2. O revered one, O you knowing the entire truth, through your grace I have heard various duties about Viṣṇu, which are the causes of complete crossing (of the worldly existence). Now I also desire to hear the greatness of Gītā, having heard which devotion to Viṣṇu enhances. Now tell it, O god, if I am dear to you.

The lord said:

3-4. We worship great Viṣṇu, Acyuta, resembling the hemp-flower, having the lord of birds as his seat, and lying on the bed of Śeṣa. Once Lakṣmī, delighting the three worlds, respectfully asked (Viṣṇu) enemy of Mura, comfortably seated on a charming seat.

Lakṣmī said:

5. O revered one, with what purpose are you sleeping in the Milky Ocean—you, like one who is neutral, having instituted glory in the world is it were? (*obscure*).

The lord said:

6. Hearing these words, proud through knowledge, of Lakṣmī, the destroyer of Mura, with his eyes doubting and smiling, spoke with soft words.

The lord said:

7-13 O you of a beautiful face, I am not sleepy. With my sight turned inside and pursuing the truth, I see my own body of Śiva. O goddess, that which the contemplative saints see within with their sharp intellect, which produces a continuous mass of joy and which is without a second, is the immutable light, of the nature of the self, and unharmed, resorting to which the world subsists, and which is experienced by me, and without which there is no element in the world, mobile or immobile, and having secured which, Dvaipāyana (i.e. Vyāsa) produced the holy text of the Gītā; after having thought in many ways the very intelligent one churned the holy texts of the Vedas. O chief goddess, having resorted to it, a great joy, I, with my mind delighted, appear to be sleepy in the Milky Ocean.

Having heard these limited delightful words of the enemy of Mura, Lakṣmī, with her rolling eyes full of joy, was amazed.

Lakṣmī said:

14-20. O Hṛṣīkeśa, you alone are always to be meditated upon by the self-controlled ones. Therefore, I have a great curiosity to hear from you about that which is greater than you. O Acyuta, tell me if there is someone different from you who are the lord, the creator and the destroyer of the worlds.

The lord said:

O goddess, this my body is illusory and not real, and is augmented with the mass of the acts of creation, maintenance and withdrawal. O dear one, the nature of the soul is different from this. It is without duality and unity. It is free from existence and non-existence; and without beginning or end. It is pure consciousness, has acquired lustre, is beautiful due to great joy, is the form of lord, can be known only through the oneness of the soul, and is told in the Gītā.

Hearing these words of him of an unlimited lustre, she having doubt due to contradictory statement said: "If you are highest joy, and not known through speech and mind, then how does Gītā make you known. Remove this doubt of me."

The lord (Śīva) said:

21-26. Having heard the proper words of Lakṣmī, the lord told her the Gītā, the view leading one to the self, along with an old account. "O greatest goddess, I am the soul (looked at) in two ways as higher and lower. The higher is a (mere) witness, qulityless, partless and auspicious. The lower one, I am Pañcavaktra; it also remains in two forms. I, Maheśvara, the soul, am to be explained through the difference in words and meanings, as, through the words of the Gītā, my strong bond, of the nature of the objects in the mundane existence, is completely cut off; since (my two forms) Pañcavktra and Maheśvara, are dependent on its study." (*obscure*). Hearing these words of him, of the great ocean of the essence of Gītā, those afraid of the mundane existence know it through the difference between this and that. Lakṣmī asked this to him. He told her the entire greatness along with its account, remaining in major and minor parts. (*obscure*).

The lord (Viṣṇu) said:

27-31. O you beautiful lady, I shall tell you about my firm existence in the Gītā. The five faces are the five chapters in order. The (next) ten chapters are the arms; one is the belly, and the (remaining) two are the lotus-like feet. Thus the eighteen chapters are the divine forms of words. It, destroying great sins, should be known through knowledge only. Therefore, he, the very intelligent one, who studies a chapter, or half of it, or a verse or half a verse is liberated like Suśarman.

Lakṣmī said:

O lord, who was he named Suśarman? What caste did be belong to? How was his nature? Whence was he liberated? Due to which cause did his liberation take place?

The lord said:

32-47a. There was a wicked (man) named Suśarman, who was the limit of sinners (i.e. the worst sinner). He was born in the family of brāhmaṇas, who did cruel deeds, and had not realised the self. He did not meditate (upon the god), did not mutter (hymns), did not perform a sacrifice, did not honour his guests; but due to his possessing strength he indulged in sensual objects only. He was always engaged in husbandry, subsisted on leaves, loved liquor, ate flesh; for a very long time he passed his time like this. Desiring to fetch leaves, he moved into a sage's orchard. The dull-witted one was bitten there by a deadly serpent. Having died, and having gone to many hells, he came (i.e. was born) again and was born as a bull. A lame man bartered him for his subsistence. With a great difficulty, he, carrying him (i.e. the lame man) on his back, passed seven or eight autumns. He was maimed, his eyes rolled, and vomited foam continuously. He neither lived nor died due to his own acts. Some time the lame man made him revolve speedily. He suddenly fell on the ground and fainted. As this world is attracted by curiosity, in the crowd (around him) a meritorious man gave his religious merit to him. Some others also, remembering their own deeds, gave (him their religious merit). There was (in the crowd) a courtezan also, leading the course of the worldly life; and not knowing her religious merit, she gave (him) some religious merit. By the servants of Death he was taken to the city of the dead. He was released due to his being meritorious as a result of the religious merit given by the courtezan. Again he came to the earth and was born in the house of noble persons—brāhmaṇas. He remembered his (former) existence; after a long time he, desiring to know religious merit removing his ignorance, approached the courtezan, and proclaimed himself; he asked her. She told (him): "This parrot, living in the cage daily tells me. My heart was purified due to that, and I divided my religious merit." The parrot, asked by the two, started narrating an account that had formerly taken place, after remembering his former existence also.

The parrot said:

47b-55. Formerly I was a learned man, deluded by the pride of my learning. Due to my hatred for loveliness I was jealous even of virtuous persons. After (some) time, having departed from life, I then reached abhorred worlds. Then, I who very much censured (my) good preceptor, was born in the stock of a parrot. In the summer season, I, the wicked one, was also separated from my parents. In the summer, in which the roads were heated, I was brought by best sages and was dropped in a cage in the hermitage, the resort of the great. Hearing from the sons of the sages revising with great care the first chapter of the Gītā, I repeatedly recited it. In the meanwhile, a fowler indulging in stealing, snatched and sold me.

Thus the account was told.

The lord said:

This chapter was enunciated before. Due to that he dispelled his sin. With his heart purified by that the best bird was released. Thus talking to one another, and telling its greatness, they, the wise ones, constantly muttering it, obtained salvation in the house. Therefore, for him who recites or listens to the first chapter, or would remember or study it, the ocean of the mundane existence is not difficult to cross.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTYSIX

The Second Chapter of the Gītā

The lord said:

1-17. The excellent account of the first chapter has been narrated. O Lakṣmī, also listen to the importance of the other chapters. In the southern direction, in the city called Purandara, (a city) of the teachers of sacred texts, there lived a rich man, well-known as Devaśarman. He honoured guests; he was a learned person; he was proficient in the Vedas and (other)

sacred texts; he offered hosts of sacrifices and was always dear to the ascetics. Offering oblations into fire, he pleased the gods for a long time. The religious-minded one did not obtain conclusive peace. Desiring beatitude, he everyday waited upon ascetics with truthful intentions, with not a few rites. When he was doing like this, and when a long time had elapsed, some Muktakarman formerly appeared on the earth. He had direct knowledge (of the supreme spirit); had no desire; had fixed his gaze on the tip of his nose; his mind was tranquil; he meditated on the highest Brahman; and was full of joy. The learned one, having held (i.e. touched) his feet with an humble mind, offered him reception due to a guest in the proper manner. Bowing to the ascetic, pleased with his pure disposition, he asked him about his final beatitude. The sage told him about a teacher, a goatherd, named Mitravat, (living) in the city named Saupura. He, having saluted his feet, went to the prosperous Saupura and saw a large forest in the region to its north. It was charming with the fragrance of many flowers tossed by the wind. It had filled the quarters with the sound of the humming of the intoxicated bees. In that forest on the bank of a river, he saw Mitravat with his eyes fixed and seated on a stone-slab. He was surrounded by animals which, though mutually hostile, had given up their natural hostility, in the garden, resplendent with slow breezes. He was as it were sprinkling nectar on the earth, with (his mind) full of pity and charming with the delight of destiny, when the herds of deer were peaceful. He, excited and with his mind pleased, and with his head slightly bent, politely approached him too and honoured him. Then the learned one, with his mind concentrated, remained by the side of Mitravat. He, being composed, asked him whose time of meditation was over.

Devaśarman said:

18. I desire to know myself. So, regarding this desire, please teach me the means that has secured success.

The lord said:

19a. Having thought for a while, that Mitravat also spoke like this:

Mitravat said:

19b-38. O learned one, know an old account being narrated by me. On the bank of Godāvarī, there was a city named Pratiṣṭhāna. There was (a man) Durdama by name (born) in the family of the learned. There was king Vikrama, being served (by people); everyday he accepted gifts, and (thus) fed his belly. Binding him with the noose of Death, Death took him to Yama's abode. Having experienced torments in all hells, he was born in a family of brāhmaṇas of a bad character. He was attended by learning (obtained) in the previous birth. He married a haughty girl from a mean family. In course of time, she abandoned childhood and entered youth. Her breasts were stout, buttocks fine, eyes perturbed with passion; she did not put up with her husband of a bad character; and loved other men as husbands. Desiring to earn her livelihood, she went out of the city. For a long time she was sexually united with a lustful man born as a cāṇḍāla. As a result of union with him she conceived, and a daughter was born. She was his wife only due to a former sinful attachment. The same, (getting) old, was born as a female imp. Due to bad company and attachment to bad women she became wicked-minded. Having an ardent desire for tasting blood she ate a diseased fowler. She roamed in the fearful forest, and was outcast by people, on seeing her. Having reached the world of the dead, the fowler became a tiger, due to the efficacy of the killing, after having stayed in fierce hells. She too, of a wicked mind, died in course of time. Having gone to dreadful hells, she was born as a female goat in my house. O learned one, I, not noticing a fearful tiger, as it were devouring everything, looked after her and others. Seeing him to have come, I, afraid of death, left the flock of the female goats, and ran (away) due to fear. The tiger, remembering former hostility came near. The female goat quickly went near him having plough-like fangs. She giving up her fear and abandoning her hostility, stood there unrestrained. The tiger too, free from hatred, was quiet. Seeing him like that, she started speaking: "O tiger, lift me up carefully and eat me as desired by you. You are not having this intention. How did you give up your hostile intention?" Hearing these words the tiger, free from

hatred, then spoke these words: "At this place my hatred has gone (away); my hunger and thirst have passed (away). Therefore, I do not long for you who have stood by me."

39-55. Thus addressed, she spoke again: "How did I become fearless? What do you know to be the cause of this? If (you know), please tell (it) to me". The tiger, thus addressed (by her), again spoke to the female goat: "I do not know it". Then they moved out to ask the great one who had gone ahead. The two having come to me, asked me who was much amazed. With the two I asked the lord of monkeys. The monkey, O brāhmaṇa, (on being) asked by me, respectfully said to him these words: "O goatherd, listen; about this I shall tell (you) an old account. See, this great abode was formerly in a forest. Here Druhiṇa had installed Śiva's Phallus. An itntelligent (person), Sukarman by name, practising penance, worshipped Śiva honoured by gods after having brought wild flowers. Having bathed (the Phallus) with the river-water, he lived there just by that deed (of worshipping Śiva). After a long time a guest came to him. Having fetched fruits, he offered them to him. Being pleased with that hospitality, he said to Sukarman: "What is the root of the act, enjoying the fruit of which you are staying here? Why do you just desire to live in the way of servile imitation?" He, thus addressed by the sage who was mostly pleased, spoke in reply clear words, most beneficial to himself: "O learned one, I really know the fruit of this act. Śambhu is served merely for the desire of enjoyment. The fruit—the result—of this service of Śiva is that you will favour me, knowing my desire." Having heard these true and pleasant words of him, the ascetic, being pleased, wrote the second chapter of the Gītā on the stone-slab and ordered the brāhmaṇa to recite and study it quickly: "Your desire will easily bear fruit everywhere." The intelligent one, speaking like this, disappeared (even) when he was watching. He, being amazed, constantly remained (reciting the Gītā) by his order. Then, after a long time, wherever the devout one, of a pleased mind, went, the penance grove became quiet. There was no antagonism, no hunger, no thirst, no fear due to the penance of him, muttering the second chapter.

Mitravat said:

56-62. Thus addressed by him, and having heard a great story, I, allowed by the pleased one, went with the female goat and the tiger. Having gone to the stone-slab I saw the chapter that is written (there). One should recite it. By its revision only, he reached the excellent, concluding limit of penance. O good one, therefore, you should everyday recite that chapter. Due to that your salvation will not be a remote occurrence.

Devaśarman was (thus) advised by Mitravat himself. Bowing down and honouring him, he went to the city of Purandara. Having met there in a temple certain wise man, he told him this account, and then recited this chapter. Taught by him, the pure-minded one carefully recited the second chapter and obtained the blameless, highest position. I have thus told you the account of the second chapter. Now listen, O Indirā, I shall tell you the importance of the third chapter.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTYSEVEN

The Story of Jaḍa: The Importance of the Third Chapter

The lord said:

1-11. A brāhmaṇa, named Jaḍa, of the family of Kauśika (living) in Janasthāna, abandoned the acts proper for his caste, and fixed his mind on living as a merchant. He was addicted to others' wives; he played with dice; he drank liquor; he was always engrossed in hunting. Thus he passed his time. When his wealth was exhausted, he started stealing. He seized the wealth of those who desired to perform sacrifices. For trading he went away and having secured musk, kṛṣṇāgaru (sandal), and chowries bright like the moonlight, brought them from (a place) at a distance of five or six yojanas. The next day he, having crossed a great distance, was overpowered by robbers when the sun was setting and darkness was spreading, and was quickly killed by them. Due to his loss of religious merit he

was born as a very fierce goblin. He was thirsty; he was oppressed by hunger; he licked the corners of his mouth; his hair was raised; he had big shanks; his mighty belly had sunk into his back. His body was one in which only bones were left. He very much turned his eyes wickedly. In the meanwhile, his son who was religious-minded and conversant with Vedas, very much guarded (piety) and desiring to see him, went (to look for him). Everyday he sought for news from the travellers, but did not get (any). Then, a man, his companion, arrived. Having learnt the account from him, he very much lamented for his father.

12-21a. Then the wise one, having thought, desiring to perform the obsequies, set out, with necessary materials, to go to Vārāṇasī. Having passed seven or eight nights on the way, he began offering the sandhyā prayer at the root of the tree where his father was killed. There he muttered the third chapter of the Gītā. Then a terrible sound was heard in the middle of the sky. He then saw his fierce father falling from the sky. With his mind overcome with wonder and fear, he saw before him in the sky, (his father) full of great lustre. With a concentrated mind he saw in the sky a divine aeroplane which was full of a crore of small bells and which had pervaded the quarters with its lustre. There he saw his father who had got into it and who was surrounded by divine damsels, who was being praised by sages and who had put on a yellow garment. Seeing him, he bowed down, and he (the father) blessed him. Then he asked him this account, and he too told it to him: "O son, due to the religious merit of my body, you, muttering (the third chapter of Gītā) near (me) have fortunately released me from the (effects of) acts, difficult to be abandoned. Then now desist from muttering, since that for which you did (the muttering after going) to Vārāṇasī, has come to you."

The lord said:

21b. Thus addressed, he said to his father, of a blazing lustre:

The son said:

22a. Advise me about my well-being. What else should I do?

The lord said:

22b-26a. Then the father said to the son: "O innocent one, do this. My brother has done the same act as I have done. He has gone to a terrible hell. Please release him (from there). My desire is: You should release others in my family who have gone to hell." Thus addressed, the son, with the palms of his hands joined, said: "Tell me, by (doing) which act I shall release them all." The father who was thus addressed, said to his son:

The father said:

26b-47. O son do that, by (doing) which I was liberated. Do that and give the religious merit springing from it. Then, they, giving up (i.e. free from) pangs like me, will soon go to that highest position of Viṣṇu.

The son, who was advised, said: "O father, if you like my words, I shall release all those denizens of hell." "Let it be so; may happiness come to you. A great dear thing has come up." Having thus directed his son, the father went to the highest position of Viṣṇu. He too, having returned from him, and having gone to Janasthāna, spent his time in the abode of the beautiful city of Śauri. For years he did what his father had told him. He gave the religious merit which he had got, and liberated the denizens of hell. In the meanwhile the servants of Viṣṇu, freeing the denizens of hell, going to the place of torture came there. He honoured them in various ways with acts of hospitality. Asked about their welfare, they spoke about complete happiness. Having thus honoured them, the wise lord of the world of dead ancestors asked them the reason of their arrival, and they told it to him: "O lord Yama, know that Śauri (i.e. Viṣṇu), lying on the bed of Śeṣa, has sent us to you to direct you. Through our mouth (i.e. through us) the god asks about your well-being. He directs (you) to release all the beings in hell." Having heard the order of Viṣṇu of unlimited lustre with his head bent down, having honoured it, he thought about something in his mind. Seeing all of them released and proud, he, followed by all of them, then went to Viṣṇu's abode. By an excellent vehicle he went where the Milky Ocean was.

Near it he saw the lord of the world, whose lustre was like many crores of suns that had risen, who was dark-blue like a blue lotus, whose lustre was mixed with that of the rays of the jewels on the hood of the serpent (Śeṣa) that was his bed, who was being seen with his mind full of joy and pleased, who was repeatedly and affectionately seen by Lakṣmī with glances full of devotion, who was served by meditating saints around him with the pupils of their eyes steady due to meditation, who was being praised by Indra in order to vanquish his antagonists, who, the heap of virtues, was being sung by words embodied, issued from the mouth of Brahman at the end of (the utterance of) the Vedic words, who was pleased and also neutral, who saw himself simultaneously with the mobile and the immobile in all beings in all stocks having their merit collected, who delighted himself with glances full of lustre, who had a body, all-pervading, and brightened by the lustre of the serpent (i.e. Śeṣa), who was dark-blue like the petal of a blue lotus or like the sky seen in the moonlight. Seeing him, he extolled him with many prayers.

Yama said:

48-60. O creator of all, salutation to (you) whose mind is pure, from whose mouths the Vedas were emitted, who are of a universal form, who are the creator. O you dreadful one due to the force of your strength, salutation to (you) Viṣṇu who destroyed the pride of the lord of demons; salutation to the excellence in preservation(?), and to the prop of the universe. Salutation to (you) who conquered the multitude of sins of all living beings, from whose eye on the forehead, that is slightly opened, lustre has sprung up. You are the lord, the soul of all the worlds and the great god. Therefore, having sent forth all devotees of Viṣṇu, you pity them. You pervade the entire world nourished by Māyā but you are not overcome by it by qualities born of it. Though you are within them, you are not overcome by the two (i.e. Māyā and its qualities). With your mind controlled, you rest within yourself in spite of your eyes turning to the objects of senses and moving towards the fruit. As you are limitless, your greatness also has no end. In this case silence alone is proper for me. How can you be the object of words?

Having praised him like this, he with the palms of his hands folded, said these words: "These vicious beings were fastened by me in pursuance of my duty. O lord of the world, order if I have to do some other piece of work." Thus respectfully addressed by him, Viṣṇu spoke, as if sprinkling (him) with nectar, with a voice deep like (the thundering of) the clouds: "I, acting as is proper for the occasion, emancipate people from sins. Having entrusted the responsibility to you, I am not sorry for the embodied beings. So do your duty. Go home." (Thus) spoke the lord. And speaking like this, the god vanished. He too came to his city. He too, having emancipated all those kinsmen of him living in various hells, himself went to Viṣṇu's heaven by an excellent vehicle.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTYEIGHT

The Fourth Chapter : The Story of Two Girls

The lord said:

1. Now I shall tell (you) the greatness of the fourth (chapter) also. Listen (to it), due to which the two girls, giving up their condition as badari trees, went to heaven.

Lakṣmī said:

2-3. How did the two girls, giving up their state of being the badari trees, go to heaven? O god, who were they formerly? How did they attain prominence? I desire to hear this. O lord, please tell it. Hearing this great story I am not satisfied.

The lord said:

4-22. On the bank of the Bhāgīrathī there was a city (named) Vārāṇasī. A saint named Bharata lived there in the temple of Viśveśvara. Always absorbed in the soul, he muttered the fourth chapter carefully. Due to that study, the good one was not overcome by couples (of opposite qualities). Some

time, he, sporting, went out of the city. The ascetic saw gods who were nearby. Using one as a pillow and resting on the other with his foot, he took rest at the root of the two badari trees from which fruits fell. When the ascetic went from there, the couple of the badari trees became dry, leafless and branchless within five or six days. The two (trees) then were born somewhere in the house of brāhmaṇas. The pair, growing for seven years, (while) sporting saw an ascetic who had come from distant regions. Seizing his feet, they spoke words that were true and pleasant. "O sage, due to your favour only we two were liberated. Abandoning our condition as badari trees, we have obtained human birth." The sage, thus addressed by them, having forgotten (what he had done) replied: "O girls, when, and for what reason, were you liberated by me? I do not know the cause of your being reduced to the condition of badari (trees). (Please) tell it." The two girls told him the cause of their being the badari trees, and also of their liberation from that condition, difficult to give up. "On the bank of Godāvarī there is a holy place giving religious merit to men. It is known as Chinnapāpa and had reached great excellence. There (a man) named Satyatapas practised a very severe penance. In the severe summer he remained in the midst of blazing fires. In the rainy season his hair was continuously sprinkled with showers; in winter he remained in water having his body horripilated. The restrained one, always pure and practising penance in (every) season, deriving great joy, fixed his mind on the (highest) soul only. He bore great love for trees always bearing fruit and having thick shadows, and for beings free from jealousy. Even Brahmā himself everyday enquiring of him who was endowed with wisdom while aiming at the fruit of the penance, remained by his side. Due to lack of fear, that penance of him expressed in meditation upon Brahman who everyday approached him, increased. Then Indra, thinking that he was almost unseated from his prosperous position, and being afraid, put in a hundred obstacles. Calling us two, equal (to each other) from among the celestial nymphs, he ordered:

23-37. 'Create an obstacle in the penance practised by this one who, displacing me from my position, desires to enjoy (my) kingdom.' Having received this message, we two went from the

presence of Indra to Godāvarī where the sage stayed. Along with slender-bodied women, sweet and indistinct music was commenced there with deep-sounding tabors and sweet-sounding lutes. We had large buttocks, stout and large breasts, lotus-like smiling faces, and a little curly hair, shoulders on which jewelled rings were seen, eyes bright like lotuses. Our waists were slim, we had round thighs, our steps were even. Following tunes, rhythm and time, we danced; we showed our full gait conforming to the emotion. When we two danced the circle of the quarters (i.e. all the quarters) roared after first mildly starting and then increasing (the sound). Then due to the speed of the movement of our bodies there was a fragrant and very cold breeze. With the ends of our upper garments slightly blown, we manifested our breasts. Our excessive movement intensified (the passion of) love. It produced anger in the sage whose mind was unchanged. Then throwing water with his hand, he angrily cursed us: 'On the bank of Gaṅgā turn into badari-trees.' (We), being polite (said to him): 'Due to our being dependent, we acted badly. Pardon us for that behaviour.' (Thus) the sage was later propitiated. Then he, of a pious mind, brought about (our) freedom from the curse. The sage (said): 'It would last till the arrival of Bharata. You will be born among the mortals, and will have the recollection of former existences; on his having come near you, and on his remembering the fourth chapter (of the Gītā), you shall have acquittal.' We salute you, not only because you freed us from the curse but also from this dreadful worldly existence."

The lord said:

38. The sage thus addressed and honoured by them was pleased, and went as he had come. The two girls would always recite the fourth chapter.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTYNINE

The Fifth Chapter: The Story of Piṅgala

The lord said:

1-17a. O goddess, I shall now narrate in brief the importance of the fifth chapter, respected by the world. O dear one, listen attentively. There was a brāhmaṇa named Piṅgala, born in the city of Purukutsa in the Bhadra country. He was born in a pure family of brāhmaṇas, expounders of the Vedas. Having abandoned (the study of) holy texts proper for his family and the Vedas, he took to instrumental music, song, dance etc. and played upon a tabor etc. Having exerted himself in (mastering) singing, dancing and instrumental music, he obtained great fame and entered the king's house. (Thus) formerly he stayed with the king. He approached others' wives and enjoyed them with an undivided mind. Then he, puffed up with pride and unrestrained, always told him in private the weak points of others. His wife was Aruṇā by name, who was born in a mean family. She moving with a lover and looking for (paramours), took him to be a hindrance, and in her house at night she killed him by cutting off his head and buried him in the ground. Deprived of his life, he went to Yama's abode. Having lived in invincible hells, he was born as a vulture in a solitary forest. She too, casting her body due to fistula of the pudendum went to dreadful hells, and was born as a female parrot in that forest. The vulture remembering his former enmity, tore her wandering here and there with a desire to take grains, with his sharp talons. Then the vulture ran after the female parrot falling into a human skull, and he too was killed by bird-catchers. His wife (i.e. the female parrot) died there in the water in the human skull. The very cruel vulture having gone there, got drowned into that only. The two, taken by Yama's servants, went to the world of the manes. The two, entertaining fear, remembered the wicked deeds formerly done by them. Then Yama noticed their censurable deeds, and suddenly also noticed their great auspicious deed in bathing in it (i.e. in the human skull) and dying. Then he permitted the two to go to their

desired world; though their minds were unassailable, they were amazed at remembering their own sins.

17b-24. Approaching and bowing they said to Yama: "We have collected censurable sins before. (Then) what is the cause for our (going to the) desired worlds? (Please) tell it to us." Thus addressed by them, Yama then spoke these words to them: "On the bank of Gaṅgā there lived an excellent brāhmaṇa Baṭu by name. He was alone, without the feeling of mineness, tranquil, free from attachment and jealousy. He always repeated the fifth chapter of the Gītā. With his soul purified due to that religious merit, he, though a sinner, realised the eternal Brahman on hearing it after he cast his body. His soul, whose body was purified by the Gītā, was purified. Having reached that water in his skull, you two became pure. Therefore, you go to the worlds desired by you who are purified by the fifth chapter of the Gītā." Thus advised by him, the impartial one, they got into a divine car and went to the position of Viṣṇu.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY

The Sixth Chapter: The Story of Raikya

The lord said:

1-20. O you of an excellent face, I shall tell you the importance of the sixth chapter, hearing which men have salvation on hand. On the bank of Godāvarī there is a great city Pratiṣṭhāna where, O you of smiling eyes, I, named Pippaleśa, dwell. There swans remove the fatigue of the self-controlled ones with cold sprays from the cavities in their wings on the bank of Godāvarī. The Godāvarī-water made fragrant with the pollen from the cups of throbbing lotuses is praiseworthy as it makes people free from old age. Fie upon the nectar of the lord of herbs (i.e. the Moon), destroying sins! There the best sages touch the faces of the Mahārāṣṭra women bathing (in Godāvarī), misunderstanding them to be fully bloomed lotuses. There the sporting Mahārāṣṭra beauties snatch (by surpassing) the humming of the

bees the ascetics' minds also. There the Moon everyday wanes on seeing the face of a woman sporting on the top of a very high mansion. The sloping roof of a very high mansion is touched by sages and gandharvas with rays of great gems unsteady due to breezes (blowing) over dūrvā and sandal(?). In it the horses of the Sun's chariot when he is going, are free from fatigue due to the breezes from the banners that are tossed. In it the Malaya mountain appears to be left with stones, when the hosts of merchants collected innumerable (pieces of) sandal wood. In it even pearls are seen to be accumulated everywhere like the bunches of the laughter of the city-deity. There lived a king named Jñānaśruti. When he, of a strong lustre, lifted the earth like a gem, even Śeṣa, resembling the Sun in radiance, was (just) a snake in general (*obscure*). The desire-yielding trees were as it were darkened through shame on seeing his matchless generosity (manifested) by the continual smoke of the sacrifices. Gods greedy of eating the sacrificial oblations did not at all leave the city of Pratiṣṭhāna. Clouds, constantly well-nourished by the streams of water used for gifts and the moonlight of his valour and the smoke of sacrifices offered by him, showered in time. Calamities did not find even the smallest place anywhere. Right courses prevailed when he ruled the earth. He everyday looked upon wells, tanks and lakes as the treasures remaining in the heart of the earth. His palace shone with white banners, like the Himālaya mountain with the multitude of the ripples of Gaṅgā. The residents of heaven (i.e. the gods) pleased with his gifts, austerities, sacrifices, protection of his subjects, came (there) to give him a boon.

21-39. Then, tossing their masses of wings, divine female and male swans, white like lotus-stalks, went out along the path in the atmosphere. Two or three of them, led by Bhadrāśva, going quickly, and talking to one another, speedily moved ahead. All of them said together to them moving ahead speedily: "Why do you go speedily? Why do you remain ahead? Along this difficult path we should go together. Do you not see very clearly before you a mass of lustre, shining brightly of king Jñānaśruti, of a virtuous form? Hearing these words of those that lagged behind the swans that were ahead laughed and contemptuously uttered (these) words loudly: "Is the lustre of this

king Jñānaśruti more severe than the dreadful lustre of Raikya, the teacher of the Vedas?" King Jñānaśruti, comfortably seated on the top of his very lofty mansion, heard these words of the swans. Then, he, full of amazement, called his charioteer, and the noble one ordered him: "Bring Raikya". The charioteer, Maha by name, having understood (these) words of the king containing nectar, manifesting joy, went out to the city Vārāṇasī, giving salvation, where god Viśveśvara, the lord of the world and the preceptor dwells. Then to the holy place called Gayā where god Gadādhara, of blooming eyes, lives to emancipate all people. Then near Śiva. Having moved many times to all holy places he went to (the holy place) Kedāra destroying sins, seeing which (even) once mortals undoubtedly are released. Enjoying desired pleasures they are freed from great sins. Then he went to the Gauḍa country where Puruṣottama dwells, by just seeing whom men go to heaven. From there he went to the city of Dvārāvatī, giving salvation, where Kṛṣṇa, dear to Rukmiṇī, lived. A mortal, having bathed at the holy place of Gomatī and having seen the five Kṛṣṇas (there), obtains salvation after having enjoyed pleasures as desired. Then the wise one having reached the sea and seen Somanātha, the god giving enjoyments and salvation, proceeded further. He reached the city of Avantikā giving pleasures and salvation, where Mahākāla Śaṅkara dwells happily sporting with Umā. Then having reached Oṁkāra, giving happiness and granting enjoyment and salvation on the bank of Narmadā, he quickly set out from there.

40-52. Then he travelled to the city named Aśvamedhakara where Lakṣmī's lord Viṣṇu, holder of Śārṅga, actually lives. Then he reached in Viṣṇugayā a tank called Loṇāra, having bathed where and drunk (water of which) a man is released from bondage. Then he went to (a city) named Kolhāpura in Rudragayā, where revered Lakṣmī, giving (i.e. causing) devotion, dwells. A man having bathed in Pañcanadī and seen Lakṣmī, enjoys pleasures as desired, and also obtains devotion. Then having visited the city named Amalagiri, and having seen Somanātha who dwells after mounting on (i.e. on the top of) Nandikeśvara, who is auspicious, has four hands, and is ready to give gifts, he would undoubtedly have salvation. Then he saw, on the bank of

Tuṅgabhadrā, Harihara, whose arms fall on the globe of the earth in every yuga. All men seeing the charming Harihara-body, enjoy pleasures according to their desire and are freed from bondage. Having remained in heaven for a hundred kalpas and being free from the bondage of the worldly existence, they see the mighty lord of the worlds, seeing whom men never see hell. Having stayed in heaven for a hundred kalpas and being free from the desire for worldly existence, they obtain salvation. No doubt should be raised about this. Then a man should reach Śrīśaila resorted to by siddhas and gandharvas, where Girijā's lover (i.e. Śiva) called Mallinātha (lives) to draw out all people from the ocean of worldly existence. Having lived in heaven for a hundred kalpas and being free from the bondage of worldly existence, they obtain salvation. No doubt should be raised about this.

53-67. Then he reached Śrīśaila resorted to by siddhas and gandharvas, where Girijā's lover named Mallinātha (lives) to draw out all people from the ocean of this worldly existence and at every opportune time shows his own lustre. Afflictions and tortures in hell of those men who see or even remember him, keep away. There is no doubt that men free from the bondage of the mundane existence enjoy happiness in heaven and obtain salvation. Here Rāma with his younger brother and accompanied by Sītā (dwells). Having bathed and drunk (water) there a man is certainly free from hell. Men having enjoyed happiness in heaven for crores of kalpas, men freed from the path of worldly existence undoubtedly go to salvation. Then returning from there, he came, seeing on the bank of Bhīmarathī the two-armed god Viṭṭhala, giving enjoyments and salvation, (to the place) where the source of Godāvarī, the great Brahmagiri, is situated. By reaching Gautamālaya where the three-eyed Śiva dwells and after bathing and drinking (water) there where there is river Godāvarī between Aruṇa and Varuṇa, (sin due to) the murder of a brāhmaṇa perishes. Men, seeing Brahmagiri, rich in many holy places, obtain salvation only (after) being freed from the agony of the worldly existence. Then the charioteer, delighted by seeing holy places on both the banks of Gautamī, went to Mathurā, destroyer of sins. There gods and men worship the self-born god. It is the first great place of the lord, which gives

salvation. It is the birth-place of the lord of the three worlds, and is well-known to the Vedas and holy texts. It is resorted to by many hosts of gods and of brāhmaṇa sages. It is charming due to the bank of Kālindī; has the form and lustre of the crescent moon; being full of the residence of all holy places it is delightfully beautiful. It is known as Govardhanagiri, Dviṣa-dvana, and is covered by auspicious trees and creepers. It is very holy. It has the essence of the holy texts resting (there).

68-86. Then to the north he saw the city of Kāśmīra, after seeing on all sides the holy place Kururkṣetra, foremost in piety, where the lines of houses white like conches and touching the sky, have become as it were the fringes of the distinct laughter of Śiva. It is covered with golden pitchers of the garlands of devotion and grace which are as it were golden lotuses fallen from the divine river due to wind. There the banners of blue straps like rings of moss on the tops of mansions appear like the strings of pearls of the divine river. There, resorting to Kāśmīra, Sarasvatī always lives. Otherwise, how does she simultaneously write the (entire) Vedic literature? These swans that are dull due to intoxication, that have lotus-stalks in their beaks and that are the vehicles of Sarasvatī, resting there for a long time, are moving. There the swans sent by Brahmā to know a special art, shone like stars and went on all sides. The land-growing lotuses, pleasing to the touch by hand, are seen (to be used) by the enemy of the demons for the bed of the beautiful lady. There due to the statements (*upanyāsaiḥ*?) of the brāhmaṇas distinct hearing was not possible. Even a dumb man, fresh in talk, had a mass of joyous words (*obscure*). There the sky pervaded by the smoke of sacrifices, though washed by clouds, did not give up its darkness. There the place of the nectar dropped due to the great lustre of the sacrifices was seen to be distinguished by its mark. There boys resorting to the vicinity of the preceptor recite all arts by themselves due to the practice right from their birth. There the 'hum' sound of the bracelets of the brāhmaṇa wives and the humming of the wandering bees got confused. There the breeze touching again and again the cheeks of the brāhmaṇa wives, blows gently as it were through the fear of a curse. There, this god Śiva called Māṇikyeśvara, lives to give boons to men day by day. Maṇikeśa, having conquered kings,

worshipped and honoured him. Since then he took the name Māṇikyeśvara, as he was well worshipped with many majestic rubies by the Kāśmīra-king, desirous of conquest of the world. The charioteer saw at his door Raikya seated on a cart and enjoying shade and scratching his limbs. Having recognised him by the respective marks told by the king, the charioteer quickly bowed down to him and after having bowed down spoke to him.

The charioteer said:

87-98. O brāhmaṇa, in which (family are you born)? What is your name? You are constantly self-willed. Why are you resting here? What do you desire to do?

Hearing these words of him, he, full of great joy, remembered the charioteer, and said: "My desires are fulfilled. But there must be (something) as you, offering great adoration to me, are (trying to) know my mood." Taking (i.e. understanding) respectfully the intention of Raikya remaining in his mind, the charioteer slowly set out to the place where the king was. Then the charioteer with his arms folded and delighted to see his master, bowed down, and told the king the account as it took place. Then hearing his words, the king with his eyes smiling (i.e. blooming) with wonder, had a strong desire to honour Raikya. Taking a cart to which a pair of female mules was yoked, a necklace, silken garments and a thousand cows, he went to the Kāśmīra country where the meditating saint lived. Offering those (articles) to him, the king fell (prostrate) like a staff on the ground after bending with great devotion. Raikya was angry with the king. (He said:) "O bad king, O śūdra, do you not know my conduct? Take (back) this cart; lift it to which female mules are yoked; so also (take back) the garments, pearl-necklaces and the milch cows." The king, thus ordered, was afraid of Raikya. Then the king, afraid of a curse, devoutly seized the pair of his lotus-like feet, and himself said, "O brāhmaṇa, favour me."

The king said:

99. O revered one, wherefrom is this very wonderful greatness of you? Being pleased, O illustrious one, tell me accurately.

Raikya said:

100-104. O king, everyday I mutter the sixth chapter of the Gītā. Therefore, I have a heap of lustre, difficult to be borne even by gods.

Having carefully learnt from Raikya the sixth chapter of the Gītā, the wise king Jñānaśruti then suddenly became free. Raikya too, muttering near Māṇikyeśvara the sixth chapter giving salvation, obtained happiness. Gods also, who had come there, after having disguised themselves as swans for (getting) gifts, were amazed, and went out at their free will. There is no doubt that a man who constantly mutters this chapter only goes to Viṣṇu's position.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED EIGHTYONE

The Seventh Chatper: The Story of Śaṅkukarṇa

The lord said:

1-20. I shall tell you the greatness of the seventh chapter, having heard which the ears are filled with a flood of nectar. There was a city Pāṭaliputra by name, difficult of access, having high town-gates. A brāhmaṇa Śaṅkukarṇa Dayārṇava by name lived in it. Resorting to the profession of a vaiśya he earned much wealth. He did not gratify manes, did not worship gods. Intent on earning wealth, he fed kings. Once for auspiciousness, the fourth marriage started in another house along with his sons and kinsmen(?). On a night fit for religious acts a serpent having come from somewhere bit the forearm of him who was asleep. He who was just bitten, could not be cured with gems, spells or herbs, and in a few moments died. Covering his body with nimba leaves and stalks and putting it on a large bough of a tree the sons came home. Then after a long time he was born as a serpent. With his mind fixed on the desires (of the former birth), he remembered his former birth. He had thought: 'Having deceived these sons, I shall cover (i.e. bury) this wealth, a crore in amount, where my (other) wealth is placed.' Then, full

of great faith, the sons of the brāhmaṇa made an offering to Nārāyaṇa. Once, the father, troubled by the birth as a serpent, came in the dream of his sons, and told them his intention. Then they, greatly deluded by amazement got up in the morning, and being unrestrained, told each other the account. One of them, due to his love for his father, desired to emancipate him. The other son through greed for the wealth, desired to kill the serpent. The other (i.e. the third) son, with his mind fascinated by the affection for his father, (thought:) 'Maybe he is (turned) into a serpent'. Thinking like this, he simply lamented. But the middle son, deceiving his two brothers, got up under some pretext and went to his own house. Then he gently called his virtuous wife. With a spade in his hand he went where his father (turned into) a serpent was. He who was not told about (the place of) the wealth, decided accurately about it through (certain) marks. Through greed, he came to that place to strike (down) the anthill. He made his wife take out the earth, and he himself dug the ground. From the anthill that was being dug, a very fierce serpent came out. Then the serpent with mouthfuls of poison and hissing, told him (these) words:

The serpent said:

21. Who are you? Why have you come (here)? Why are you digging the hole? O, fool, who has sent you? Tell that to me.

The son said:

22. I am your son, named Śiva. I have a strong desire to take gold. Being very much amazed by the dream I had at night, I have come (here).

Śiva said*:

23. Having heard these words of the son, censured by the world, the serpent, laughing loudly, started speaking clearly:

The serpent said:

24. If you are (my) son, quickly free me who am born as a serpent for (the preservation of) the deposit of the former birth, from bondage.

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*I.e. Lord Śiva.

The son said:

25. O father, tell me how you can be freed, since leaving the entire world, I have come (here) at night.

The father said:

26-34. O son, except the seventh chapter of the Gītā, which is full of nectar, and which is the cause of the removal of the old age, death and agony of a living being, the holy places, gifts, austerities, sacrifices are not at all capable of releasing me. O son, feed devoutly a brāhmaṇa studying the seventh chapter on the day of a śrāddha offered to me. Due to that I shall be undoubtedly released. O son, also feed other brāhmaṇas proficient in the Vedic learning according to your capacity and with great devotion.

Having heard these words of the father turned into a serpent, all the sons did as he had told (them, and even) more than that. Then that wealthy Śaṅkukarṇa, having cast off the serpentine body, divided (the wealth) among his sons, and obtained a divine body. All the sons, of a good behaviour, were delighted at the wealth which their father gave after dividing it and which amounted a crore. They, of pious minds, constructed wells, tanks, lakes, performed sacrifices to please the god, so also opened free boardings. Then, muttering the seventh chapter, they with their eyes fixed on final bliss, obtained release, knowing the eighth one (also) the most desired one.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED EIGHTYTWO

The Eighth Chapter: *Bhāvaśarman's Story*

Śiva said:

1-6. O Pārvatī, listen. I shall tell you the greatness of the eighth chapter, by merely listening to which you will get great joy. A city named Āmardaka is well-known in the southern

country. There was a brāhmaṇa named Bhāvaśarman, the husband of a courtesan. He, very fierce, ate flesh, drank liquor, stole the wealth of the good, dallied with others' wives, had a strong desire for hunting, carried out his strong desire. Drinking the nectar-like juice of tālī-fruit up to his throat (i.e. excessively), he was very much troubled by indigestion. The sinful one died (in due course) of time, and became a great tāla tree. A couple turned into brāhmaṇa-ghosts, lived there resorting to its shadow, dense and very cold.

The goddess said:

7. Tell me, O god, what was their caste? What was their nature? What was their profession? Due to what deed were they turned into brāhmaṇa-ghosts?

Śiva said:

8-17. There was a brāhmaṇa, Kuśīvala by name, who knew the essential nature of the Vedas and Vedāṅgas, who was proficient in all holy texts, and whose conduct was good. His wife, named Kumati, was of a wicked mind. He along with his wife, was very greedy and accepted great gifts like a buffalo, a Kālapuruṣa(?), horses etc., day after day; (but) he did not give (even) a chowrie to brāhmaṇas. As time passed, the two evil spirits, of the form of brāhmaṇa-ghosts, with their bodies oppressed by hunger and thirst, roamed over this earth. They then rested after having come to the root of the palm tree. "How will this great agony of ours go away? When will there be freedom from this stock of brāhmaṇa-ghosts?" Thus asked by the brāhmaṇa female, the brāhmaṇa (male) spoke (to her): "How can we be free from this calamity without instruction in the knowledge of the supreme spirit, metaphysical consideration, and the knowledge of the manner in which a deed is done."

The wife said:

O best man, what is that Brahman; what is metaphysics? What is an act?*

Listen to the wonder that took place, when his wife spoke

*Cp. BG VIII. 1a: किं तद्ब्रह्म किमध्यात्मं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम ।

this much. That tree listening to half a verse from the eighth chapter gave up its form of the palm-tree and became an excellent brāhmaṇa. With his mind suddenly shaken by knowledge, he was free from the garb of sins. The couple became free due to that greatness (of the Gītā).

18-25. When these words luckily went out of his mouth, then from the atmosphere an aeroplane appeared, which had small bells tinkling, which was auspicious, which was adorned with faces resembling the orb of the moon, of celestial damsels, which was crowded with bees hovering round the lotuses in the form of the faces of the celestial nymphs, which was adorned with chowries white like the foam on the shore of the Milky Ocean being churned, and charming like the ripples of Gaṅgā, lovely with the singing gandharvas, and with hundreds of young divine damsels dancing. The couple got into the divine aeroplane and went to heaven. The entire occurrence of this place was amazing. Then the wise one wrote this half verse carefully. He went to the city named Vārāṇasī, giving salvation, seeking to propitiate Viṣṇu, god of gods. The generous-minded one started to practise a great penance there. In the meanwhile, (Lakṣmī) the daughter of the Milky Ocean, after joining her hands, asked Viṣṇu, the lord of the world, and the god of gods: "How is it that you are wakeful after having abandoned sleep? Tell me".

The lord said:

26-28. An intelligent brāhmaṇa named Bhāvaśarman, full of a flood of devotion, is seriously practising penance on the bank of Gaṅgā at Kāśī. With his senses controlled, he is muttering half the verse from the eighth chapter of the Gītā. O goddess, due to that penance I am very much pleased. Thinking for a long time desiring to give a fruit like (i.e. suitable to) his penance, I am now wakeful (like this).

Pārvatī said:

29. O lord, if Viṣṇu, though pleased, became thoughtful, what fruit did Bhāvaśarman, the devotee of Viṣṇu, get?

Śrī Mahādeva said:

30-32. Then that best brāhmaṇa, Bhāvaśarman, having received the grace of (Viṣṇu) the enemy of Mura, got endless happiness. Those born in his family who had formerly experienced torture, also obtained the (highest) position due to his acts. O you fawn-eyed one, I have told a little about the greatness of the eighth chapter. It should be always noted.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED EIGHTYTHREE

The Ninth Chapter: A Goat's Story

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-8. Hereafter I shall carefully explain (this importance of) the ninth chapter. Being steady (i.e. attentive) listen to it, O daughter of the Himālaya Mountain. On the bank of Narmadā, there was a city named Māhiṣmatī. There lived an auspicious brāhmaṇa named Mādhava, who knew the true nature of the Vedas and Vedāṅgas, who every time loved the guests. The pure-minded one, having earned much money by means of his learning only, some time commenced to perform a great sacrifice. He brought a goat, for killing him at the sacrifice after worshipping his body. He (the goat), laughing loudly, uttered (these) words: "What is the use of these many sacrifices, though performed in the proper manner, (but) having perishable fruits, and causing birth, old age and death? O brāhmaṇa, see my condition like this." Men staying in the pavilion, were amazed at hearing these words of the goat, that greatly excited curiosity. Then the brāhmaṇa, with his eyes motionless, saluting him devoutly and with the palms of his hands joined, respectfully asked the goat:

The brāhmaṇa said:

9. Which caste do you belong to? What is your nature? What is your mode of life? Tell (me that). Due to what act (of yours) you obtained the birth as a goat?

The goat said:

10-24. Formerly I was (born) in a very pure family of brāhmaṇas. I was proficient in the Vedic lore and offered hosts of sacrifices. Once my wife, modest with devotion to Caṇḍikā, asked for a goat from me for appeasing the disease of (our) son. Then when the goat was being killed in the pavilion of Caṇḍikā, the goat's mother, expounder of the Vedas, cursed me: "O mean brāhmaṇa, O you who are performing a sacrifice that is not approved by the holy texts, since you are killing my innocent son, you will get the stock of (i.e. will be born as) a goat." Then, O best brāhmaṇa, I, after dying after (some) time, was born as a goat, after having crossed (i.e. gone through) torment and torture of many kinds of existences. Even though I had gone to the stock of (i.e. was born as) a beast, I had (retained) the recollection of (former) births.

The brāhmaṇa said:

My mind is curious, is intent on hearing about your birth due to curiosity. Tell all (about) that to all these brāhmaṇas.

The goat said:

Some time I was (born as) a monkey. Children saw me dancing in every courtyard due to instruction given to me by a juggler. Seeing the generous sons, and my wife also, I became averse to any act and gave up the going round in dancing. Then the juggler, with his eyes red due to anger, severely beat me with round sticks, difficult to bear. Then I bleeding continuously, fainted. Smelling at food and water, I died. Then I became a dog wandering in every house. I, eating food that was abandoned and that was left after eating, filled my belly on the way. Sometime I entered the kitchen of my own house. Being hungry, I started eating the boiled rice placed in a plate. I smelt the ground, looked into the ten directions slowly and through fear. Being afraid of the sound of people, I licked my side. Then my sons came and saw me at some time. And my old wife beat me with clubs etc. Then, I, with my waist broken and discharging much blood fled.

25-33. Overcome with swoon, I somehow went out of the house. In course of time my limbs were stinking with pus and

full of insects. Then I obtained the state of (i.e. was born as) a horse. O learned man, I became a horse in the house of a distiller and died in course of time. Some time he brought me, with my teeth falling due to old age, in a square crowded with people, for sale. My wife intent on going on a pilgrimage to Dvārakā, trying to buy me for a small price, bought me and tied me, the old one, with a rope, and mounting on me along with her two or three sons, started going. Slowly I got plunged into deep mud on the bank of a lake. There I, with my neck turned, and falling into the mud, was again and again being beaten by (my) sons having clubs and stones in their hands. Being repeatedly raised I died. Then having decided that I was dead, the sons who gave up their exertion, wailed, and having surrounded their helpless mother, they went home. Then having died there I went to the stock of (i.e. was born as) a goat. I passed through many stocks, low and high, giving torment and agony.

The brāhmaṇa said:

34. O great goat, what is the use of this collection of miseries everyday? (Tell me) properly and uprightly, by what I would have endless happiness.

The goat said:

35-48. I shall, O brāhmaṇa, tell another wonder comfortably to you who are asking me, if you have curiosity. There was a city named Kurukṣetra, giving salvation. There lived king Candraśarman of the solar dynasty. At the time of the solar eclipse he, endowed with great faith, started giving gift of Kālapuruṣa. Having called a brāhmaṇa, master of the Vedas and Vedāṅgas, he went with his priest to bathe with auspicious holy water. Then Kālapuruṣa, laughing, said: "O brāhmaṇa, at the time of the solar eclipse, at this holy place called Kurukṣetra, others do not accept anything. How do you desire to receive a gift? Knowing that all this certainly causes sin, how do you proceed to do it with a mind blinded by greed of wealth?" Having heard these words of him, causing wonder to the world the brāhmaṇa said: "What is the use of this fear of

great gift? I do know the means properly to cross the unfathomable ocean of the sin due to a great gift like this." Then the king, having bathed, having put on two garments, being pure, pleased in mind, having put on white flowers and having anointed his body, having held the hand of the priest, being served by persons proper for the occasion, came (there). The king, having come there, gave the brāhmaṇa, Kālapuruṣa, according to the proper rite. Having pierced the heart of the Kālapuruṣa, a sinful cāṇḍāla, with red eyes, of a cruel appearance went out. So also, at the joy due to interest in censuring others, a female cāṇḍālikā, viz. Censure, came to the side of the brāhmaṇa whose death was brought near.

49-60. This couple of the cāṇḍālas of ruddy eyes, going out, forcibly moved into the body of the brāhmaṇa. While the king was looking on, the brāhmaṇa stood muttering the ninth chapter of the Gītā in his mind, trembling a little and remaining silent like the ocean with Viṣṇu sleeping inside trembling due to the movements of the wind. Then the cāṇḍāla-couple that was near the brāhmaṇa, was troubled by Viṣṇu's (attendants) appearing due to (the recitation of) the letters of the Gītā, and with its efforts rendered futile, and (deciding to) flee, went away. The king who actually noticed the happening like this, with his eyes smiling (i.e. dilated) due to wonder, asked the brāhmaṇa: "How—by muttering what hymn, or remembering what god—did you go over this calamity? Who was that man? Who was that woman? How did they approach (you)? How were they appeased? O brāhmaṇa tell it to me."

The brāhmaṇa said:

I know the couple: Strong sin had assumed the form of the (male) cāṇḍāla. Censure took the form of the female cāṇḍāla. I remembered the series of the verses of the ninth chapter of the Gītā. O king, know that all this is its virtue. O king, everyday I mutter the ninth chapter of the Gītā. Due to that the calamities caused by my accepting bad gifts were overcome by me. The king learnt the ninth chapter from the brāhmaṇa. Both obtained highest joy.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED EIGHTYFOUR

The Tenth Chapter: A Swan's Story

The goddess said:

1-5a. O you omniscient one, the life of all, the lord of all, the master of speech, O Śiva, I am lucky since you, respectable and visible, have explained this auspicious grandeur of the ninth chapter, the honey, full of many wonderful and sweet accounts. O lord of gods, I, hearing it, was not content. O Śiva, my desire to hear it is not dulled. (On the contrary) it increases. My life is listening to the Gītā, O you ocean of greatness. Even in that (Gītā) the sages declare the tenth chapter to be the principal. Tell me an account relating to that great chapter.

Śiva said:

5b-17. O beautiful one, listen to this ladder to the inaccessible heaven difficult to get. It is, as it were, the limit of grandeurs, highly purifying account. In the city of Kāśī, there was a brāhmaṇa devoted to pious fame. His mind was tranquil, free from mischief, cruelty and violence. With his senses controlled, he was always engaged in bliss. He was known as Dhīradhī, and was devoted to me like Nandin. He had crossed the ocean of the Vedas, and was proficient in the meaning of all holy texts. Once while he, subservient (i.e. given) to meditation, with his mind plunged in (the thought of) the internal soul, having the eyes of (i.e. perceiving) the Supreme Spirit, was going, I, through affection, ran, and gave support to his hand, causing wonder. The absent-minded one, having sipped water, having fixed his eyes full of great joy on the tip of his nose, remained, with his senses as it were sleepy. When he, of long (broad) eyes, slept for a while, without fear, at night, using as a pillow the large threshold of the door, O broad-eyed one, Bhṛṅgiriṭi, saluting my lotus-like feet, asked me: "Due to which rite has he secured your sight? What (kind of) penance has this noble one practised, what oblations has he made, what (hymns) has he muttered, that the god supports his hand at every step? Why is he not able to go out of this city? If, by chance, he crosses the boundary of Kāśī, he does not see even these people that are by his

side. I wish to know the cause of this—(I wish to hear) the words of my master. If I deserve to be favoured then tell me what is proper." Hearing this question of Bhṛṅgiriṭi, I said:

18-26. Once I was in the Punnāga forest which was near Kailāsa, the forest which was full of the hosts of the beautiful divine women making sounds, in which the quarters were joyful with the multitudes of the cooings of the cuckoos, which was full of the notes of (birds) like the eagle and the cātaka, which was bristling with the drops shining on the rotating, wooden machine for raising water, which was full of the bulbs of the plantain trees (growing) on the sides of the drains, which was full of musk-deer, which was stupefied with the sounds of kinnaras, which was at places resorted to by deer with the outer corners of their eyes dull due to rumination, which was full of parrots, where the swans showed their cleverness among them, which was stirred by the thick wind, with joyful sounds, in which the bees were intoxicated by the rum exuding from the Mādhavī flowers, which was full of the fragrance of the clusters of blooming trivalī flowers, in which the bees were slow due to the intoxication caused by the fragrance of blooming bakula flowers, in which the region of the earth was washed with the nectar oozing from the moon. Having sat on a seat I remained there for a while. The wind, by way of the churning sticks in the form of terrific branches breaking due to friction, blew under the pretext of a trembling mountain. Then there was a great sound which resounded at the sides of the valley.

27-38. Then from the cave of the sky a bird descended. He was like the autumnal cloud, and was as it were the mass of collyrium. He was as it were the mass of darkness, or a mountain with its wings cut off. Having rested on the earth, the bird saluted me. Having brought a fresh flower, he put it at my feet. Then the bird uttered (my) praise with distinct words: "Victory to you, O god, O Brahman, O joy, O ocean of nectar, O lord of the world, O billow of the continuous contact with good feelings, O you having infinite bodies, O you who are free from the three kinds of dirt due to your thought full of the feeling of uniqueness, O you who have conquered your senses, O you who are dependent, O you, whose body can be secured (only) by means of concentration, O you free from adjuncts,

O you who are free, O formless one, O pure one, O limitless one, O you free from egotism, O you having no obstruction, O you qualityless one, O you protector of those who have submitted themselves to you, O you with skilful lotus-like feet, O you of a terrible garland, O you great tiger, O you who burnt Cupid with flames, O you who pierced the lord of demons with an axe, O you great lord, O you who wiped the sindūra on the forehead of the wife of Tripura, O you who applied excellent saffron to the lotus-like breasts of Kātyāyanī, salutation to (you), who are away from proofs, to (you) of the form of great intellect, to (you) the lord of life, to (you) of the form of the three worlds. I salute your lotus-like feet which are touched by the excellent meditating saints and which are wonderful in going to the other end of the unlimited ocean of the worldly existence. Even the lord of speech (i.e. Bṛhaspati) is not able to praise you. Even (Śeṣa), the lord of serpents, does not have the skill in describing you, O great god; then what to say of me, a bird, with a small intelligence?"

39-54a. Having heard this praise made by the bird, I said to him: "O bird, who are you, wherefrom do you come? Your body is like that of a swan, and your colour is like that of a crow. Tell me for what purpose you have come here." The bird, the best among speakers, thus asked by me, with his neck slightly bent in respect spoke with a soft voice: "O lord of gods, O Dhūrjaṭī, know me to be Brahmā's swan. (Know) due to which this blackness has recently come up, O lord. O you omniscient one, listen to what is said (in reply to) what is asked by you. When I came to the earth from the Mānasa lake, I landed into a danger. Near the Saurāṣṭra city, I, having taken mouthfuls of lotus-stalks, white like the young crescent moon, from a lake where the lotuses were blooming, resorted to my strength and quickly went into the sky. Then from the sky I suddenly fell on the ground. Then with my mind covered with swoon, with my senses fully weakened, with my body trembling, I, being touched by cool breezes, regained consciousness. I did not ascertain the cause of my fall. 'Oh, what has this come? How had I a fall today due to which I have this blackness on my body, white like perfect camphor?' Thus when I, full of wonder, thought (to myself), I heard, from the lotus, words like these: 'O swan, get

up; I shall tell you the cause of your fall and blackness.' Then I got up and came to the middle of the lake. I saw a charming lotus-plant, having five lotuses. I commenced asking (it) the cause of (my) blackness and fall. Then I saw, in the sky, six myriad men who were dark like clouds, who had covered themselves with gold-coloured garments, who had four arms (each), the weapons (of each) of whom were a mace, a conch, a disc and a lotus, who were variegated with crowns, necklaces, armlets and ear-rings. Having saluted and gone round, keeping it to my right, the lotus-plant, I asked her everything beginning with my fall".

The lotus plant said:

54b-63a. O swan, you moved in the sky passing over me. Due to that sin you have fallen on the ground. O best bird, due to that only blackness is seen on your body. Sixty thousand bees, smelling the fragrance, produced by the middle lotus that was talking on seeing you falling with its mind full of compassion, went to heaven. Those whom you saw having a lustre like that of a blue lotus, were the sons of a sage in the seventh existence that has passed. On the bank of this very lake, they practised a very severe penance. Sometime, a beautiful lady, having breasts like clusters of campaka-flowers, with the outer corners of her eyes unsteady and charming due to wavy hair, with the brightness of her smile being kissed by the moonlight released from the pearl of her nose, having put the lute between her breasts, sang in the forest. Hearing the sound of her who was singing, the brāhmaṇas, like deer, went to her, and saw her simultaneously. They said to one another: "I saw her (first), she is mine." Then a pugilistic encounter took place among the brothers. With their chests pounded with one anothers' fists, they died.

63b-82. Having enjoyed various fearful hells, they became cranes on the earth. Then they killed wild beasts and were burnt by wild fire. Then being born as cāṇḍālas they killed travellers on the way. Having drunk poisonous water in the forest, they went to Yama's abode. One by one they got the stock of an ass, a camel. a monkey, and a cat. Then they be-

came bees, and are (now) in the lake. Today having smelt my fragrance they have gone to the position of Viṣṇu. O best bird, listen, I shall tell you (that) by which there is grandeur in me. In the third birth that has passed (from this birth), I was a daughter of a brāhmaṇa named Sarojavadana. I was devoted only to fidelity, and was engaged in serving the elders. Once, while I was teaching a sārikā, there was a delay. My husband, who got angry, cursed me: "O sinful one, be a sārikā." After death I got sārikāhood (i.e. was born as a sārikā), (but) due to the propitiousness of my fidelity, a girl in the sages' house nourished me. It is well-known that the tenth chapter (of the Gītā) is power(-ful). The brāhmaṇa recited it in the morning; I listened to it removing sin. O bird, after (some) time, I cast the body of the sārikā, and became, due to the greatness of the tenth chapter, a celestial nymph in heaven. I was known as Padmavatī; and was the dear friend of Lakṣmī. Once when I was going in an aeroplane through the sky, I saw this charming lake containing spotless lotuses. After descending, when I started sporting in its water, Durvāsas came (there) and saw me without clothes. Then I myself took up this form of a lotus plant. I have five lotuses, two lotuses with my two feet (turned into them), two lotuses with my hands (turned into them) and the fifth lotus with my face (turned into that). The lord of sages looked at me with eyes blazing with anger. "O sinful one, with this form only stay for a hundred years." Giving a curse like this, he vanished in a moment. Due to the greatness of the tenth chapter my (power of) speech has not vanished. By just going over me, you fell on the ground. O best bird, today, when you remain (by me) my curse will cease. Listen to the best chapter recited by me; by just hearning which you will be free from the curse today only.

Saying like this, she recited the tenth chapter in a soft voice. Having heard it, and having taken the lotus given by her, I offered it, the best lotus of the lotus plant, to you.

Speaking like this, he cast his body. It was wonderful.

Bhṛṅgiriṭi said:

83-99. Who was he in his former birth? How did he be-

come Brahmā's swan? With what intention did he cast his body in front of you?

Hearing these words of Bhṛṅgiriṭi, I said to him: "He was born in the former birth in a brāhmaṇa's house. He was well known as Sutapas, was a celibate and had his senses controlled. Living in his preceptor's house, he studied the Vedas everyday. He devoutly and properly served his preceptor. (Once) he while asleep touched, with his foot, his preceptor who was asleep. Due to that sin he obtained the state of a lower animal even in heaven. Then the brāhmaṇa was born among the swans of the Lotus-born (Brahmā). In this existence, when I was watching, the tenth chapter of the Gītā was narrated before him. Having heard it, the bird obtained excellent knowledge. Due to the grandeur of the tenth chapter he was born in a brāhmaṇa family. Due to practice from birth, from the lotus-like face of him even when a child the tenth chapter of the Gītā always flashes. As a result of its meaning he always sees the god holding a conch, a disc, living in all beings. He on whomsoever and whenever, he casts his affectionate glance, is released even though he is a drunkard or killer of a brāhmaṇa. Knowing that I, of the form of the Supreme Soul, brought the brāhmaṇa to this city which is naturally a holy place giving salvation. Salvation is (just) on the palm of people living here. Therefore, due to his seeing (them) no other special effect is produced. I do not allow his knowledge very difficult to get, which he formerly obtained due to the greatness of the tenth chapter, to go out of him. So also this sage obtained salvation while living. Therefore, I give him my hand when he moves and walks along the road. O Bhṛṅgiriṭi, such is the great importance of the tenth chapter.

Thus I have told the same account destroying sins as was told before (i.e. to) Bhṛṅgiriṭi. A man or a woman, whosoever (he or she may be) would obtain the fruit of all the stages of human life by merely listening to it.

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PART IX

TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY

Dr. N.A. DESHPANDE

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The purest gems lie hidden in the bottom of the ocean or in the depth of rocks. One has to dive into the ocean or delve into the rocks to find them out. Similarly, truth lies concealed in the language which with the passage of time has become obsolete. Man has to learn that language before he discovers that truth.

But he has neither the means nor the leisure to embark on that course. We have, therefore, planned to help him acquire knowledge by an easier course. We have started the series of Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology in English Translation. Our goal is to universalize knowledge through the most popular international medium of expression. The publication of the Purāṇas in English Translation is a step towards that goal.

Acknowledgements

It is our pleasant duty to put on record our sincere thanks to Dr. R.N. Dandekar and the UNESCO authorities for their kind encouragement and valuable help in the publication of the volumes in this series.

EDITORIAL

We are happy to offer this forty-seventh *Āhuti* ('oblation') in the *Jñāna-Yajña* ('Knowledge-Sacrifice') that we have undertaken in the form of the *Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology Series*. The concept of *yajña* has certain noble implications, the foremost one being that it is a selfless venture fraught with difficulties and motivated not by any selfish gain or profit but by universal good in view. In this present *yajña* dissemination of knowledge and popularization of the Purāṇas is our sole aim and this is our apology for calling it '*Jñāna-Yajña*'.

So far the *Padma Purāṇa*, of which this is Part IX in English, has been the biggest one and one still bigger is yet to follow. The last part of this Purāṇa, that is Part X, also is almost ready and thus the complete set of the Purāṇa will be made available to our readers within the next three months.

This part comprises chapters 185-245 of the sixth section, viz. Uttarakhaṇḍa, of the Padma Purāṇa. The reader will find here also, as usual, a rich variety of interesting themes.

The first eight chapters eulogize the saving power of the last eight chapters of the great Bhagavadgītā supported by illustrative stories. The next six chapters show the efficacy of reciting and listening to the Bhāgavata. It has been claimed that this Purāṇa is capable of removing misery, poverty, ill-luck and sins, of overcoming passions and anger in this Kali age. The listening to it is prescribed for seven days (*Saptāha*) at a time only on account of lack of self-control, disease, shortening of life and other blemishes characteristic of the present age. The *Bhāgavata Saptāha* has been praised as better than performing a sacrifice, observing a vow, practising penance, visiting a holy place etc. This is a form of devotion to Kṛṣṇa, which is said to be the only means of salvation fit to be resorted to in this age of unrighteousness. In an allegorical representation Bhakti (Devotion), Jñāna (Knowledge) and Vairāgya (Detachment) are depicted as a woman with two sons. She is said to have been born in the

Draviḍa country, brought up in Karṇāṭa, then to have lived in Mahārāṣṭra and become old along with her sons in Gurjara due to contact with heretics who persecuted them. This is just a figurative way of saying that the devotional movement originated in Tamil Nadu, reached its height of development in Telugu and Marathi speaking regions and declined in Gujarat, probably because of its proximity to the first entry points of Muslim raiders from the Arabian countries. It is further stated that she again became a beautiful young girl in Vṛndāvana, though Jñāna and Vairāgya remained grey-haired and old, thus showing their unpopularity and ineffectiveness in this age.

In our previous Editorials we have reiterated that in view of obviously corrupt readings, obscure passages and wrong words frequently encountered in the existing Purāṇa versions, there is a great need of bringing out thoroughly edited versions of the Purāṇa texts. A clear and convincing case is cited here. In a number of chapters of the text beginning with ch. 199 a name in the vocative case occurs very frequently as 'Śive' and sometimes as 'Śibe'. Now both the names 'Śivā' and 'Śibi' have broadly the same form in the vocative, except a difference of 'va' and 'ba' which is very likely to be ignored and has actually been ignored by some translators, though the person is different in the two cases, one being the consort of god Śiva and the other an ancient king, son of Uśīnara. The dialogue in which this occurs and that runs into several chapters is between Nārada and king Śibi but a reader who is not cautious enough may get the wrong idea that the dialogue is between Nārada and Pārvatī. It is learnt that All India Kashiraj Trust in Varanasi has been doing a laudable work in editing the Purāṇas but apparently the progress is very slow. One would wish that more bodies could come forward in the field.

One more confusing situation is found in chapters 200-209 and further up to ch. 222, where a number of holy places, viz. Prayāga, Kāśī, Śivakāñcī, Gokarṇa, Dvārakā, Kośalā, Madhuvana, Badarikāśrama, Haridvāra, Puṣkara and Naimiṣa which actually have a distance ranging from a few to hundreds of miles, are jumbled up together in a small place named Indraprastha! This obviously needs some researcher to come forward and clear this geographical mix-up.

In chapters 224 and 225 the characteristic sectarian marks are prescribed for the Vaiṣṇavas. One should compulsorily have a mark called *Ūrdhvapuṇḍra* on the forehead and imprint other parts of the body also with disc, conch and other emblems of Viṣṇu heated in fire. Viṣṇu's *Vibhūtis*, *Vibhavas* and *Vyūhas* are the topics of chapters 227-229.

Chapters 235 and 236 contain very interesting observations of the author of the Purāṇa on the birth of heretics, the measures adopted for bringing about their downfall and destruction and the grouping of the sages, doctrines and texts into *Sāttvika*, *Rājasa* and *Tāmasa*. In the list of heretics those who have on their body skulls, ash, bones and other inauspicious things are prominently included, thus casting aspersions on god Śiva himself. But in the case of Śiva it is justified as deliberately done to delude and destroy demons and heretics. Not only this but Śiva is also further said to have deliberately composed vicious scriptures like those of Pāśupatas and other Śaivite sects for the purpose. Preaching of the Buddhist doctrines and Śaṅkarite *Māyāvāda* etc. also is shown as part of the same divine conspiracy. Among the Purāṇas Matsya, Kūrma, Liṅga, Śiva, Skanda and Agni are condemned as Tāmasa (vicious). Ten vicious sages include names such as Durvāsas, Kaṇāda, Gautama etc.

In the last few chapters the incarnations of Viṣṇu in the forms of the Boar, Nṛsiṁha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are described.

—G.P. Bhatt

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ABBREVIATIONS

Common and self-evident abbreviations such as Ch(s)—Chapter(s), p—page, pp—pages, v—verse, vv—verses, Ftn—Footnote, Hist. Ind. Philo.—History of Indian Philosophy are not included in this list.

ABORI	*Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Poona
AGP	S.M. Ali's *The Geography of Purāṇas*, PPH, New Delhi, 1973
AIHT	*Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, F.E. Pargiter, Motilal Banarsidass (MLBD), Delhi
AITM	*Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology* Series, MLBD, Delhi
AP	*Agni Purāṇa*, Guru Mandal Edition (GM), Calcutta, 1957
Arch. S.Rep.	Archaeological Survey Report
AV	*Atharva Veda*, Svādhyāya Maṇḍal, Aundh
Bd. P.	*Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, MLBD, Delhi 1973
BG	*Bhagavadgītā*
Bh. P.	*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Bhagavat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad
Br.	*Brāhmaṇa* (preceded by name such as Śatapatha)
BS. P.	*Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*, Vishnu Shastri Bapat, Wai
BV. P.	*Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*, GM, 1955-57
CC	*Caturvarga Cintāmaṇi* by Hemādri
CVS	*Caraṇa Vyūha Sūtra* by Śaunaka, Com. by Mahīdāsa
DB	*Devī Bhāgavata*, GM, 1960-61
De or GDAMI	*The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval India*, N.L. De, Oriental Reprint, Delhi, 1971
Dh. S.	*Dharma Sūtra* (preceded by the author's name such as Gautama)
ERE	*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* by Hastings
GP	*Garuḍa Purāṇa*, ed. R.S. Bhattacharya, Chowkhamba, Varanasi, 1964

GS	*Gṛhya Sūtra* (preceded by the name of the author such as Āpastamba)
HD	*History of Dharma Śāstra*, P.V. Kane, G. O. S.
IA	*The Indian Antiquary*
IHQ	*The Indian Historical Quarterly*
JP	*Purāṇa* (Journal of the Kashiraj Trust), Varanasi
KA	*Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra*
KP	*Kūrma Purāṇa*, Veṅkaṭeśvara Press Edn., Bombay; also Kashiraj Trust Edn., Varanasi, 1971
LP	*Liṅga Purāṇa*, GM, 1960; also MLBD, Delhi, 1981
Manu.	*Manusmṛti*
Mbh.	*Mahābhārata*, Gītā Press, Gorakhpur, VS 2014
MkP	*Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*
MN	*Mahābhārata Nāmānukramaṇī*, Gītā Press, Gorakhpur, VS 2016
MtP	*Matsya Purāṇa*, GM, 1954
MW	Monier Williams' *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, MLBD, Delhi, 1976
NP	*Nāradīya* or *Nārada Purāṇa*, Veṅkaṭeśvara Press, Bombay
PCK	*Bhāratavarṣīya Prācīna Caritrakośa*, Siddheshwar Shastri, Poona, 1968
Pd. P.	*Padma Purāṇa*, GM, 1957-59
PE	*Purāṇic Encyclopaedia*, V. Mani, English version, MLBD, Delhi, 1975
PR or PRHRC	*Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, R.C. Hazra, Calcutta, 1948
ṚV	*Ṛg-Veda*, Svādhyāya Maṇḍal, Aundh
Śat. Br.	*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*
SC or SMC	*Smṛti Candrikā* by Devanna Bhaṭṭa
SEP	*Studies in Epics and Purāṇas*, A.D. Pusalkar, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (BVB), Bombay

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED EIGHTYFIVE

The Greatness of the Eleventh Chapter: Sunanda's Story

The goddess said:

1-2. O god, this history is a great means of accomplishing the good. O merciful one, my desire is further aroused on hearing it. O Virūpākṣa, O the first (i.e. greatest) one among speakers, explain to me the importance of the eleventh chapter (of the Gītā) supported by a story.

The lord said:

3-17. O dear one, listen to a story resting on the description of the Gītā. Even the greatness of the chapter (called) Viśvarūpa (-darśana) is purifying. O you of large eyes, (the greatness of) the chapter cannot be told. There are thousands of stories. One of them will be told by me. On the bank of the river Pragītā there was a city known as Meghaṅkara. It had a heavily laid foundation, lofty ramparts and gates. It had big (sacrificial) halls of hermitages adorned with golden pillars. Rich, happy, calm, well-behaved men with their senses controlled and speedy in their actions lived there. It was charming with the places where four roads met. It was adorned with markets and quadrangulars where gold in the jewelled pillars was shining. In it the sweet and indistinct sound of the multitude of (moving) banners and jingling bells was (heard). The atmosphere was shaken with the loud noise of Vedic recitation. The vast sky was full of the loud sounds of musical instruments. It won battles with the breezes due to flags and foliage (*obscure*). It appeared splendid with the jingling sounds of the anklets of women on the royal path and at the excellent gates, and with (sounds of) lutes, flutes, songs and the neighings of excellent horses. It constantly appeared to be equal to the cities of the regents of the quarters. There the lord of the world, Śārṅgapāṇi, shone. He was the embodiment of the highest Brahman, and the life of the sight of the world. His great form was worshipped by the lotus-eyes of Lakṣmī (*obscure*). His body was that of Trivikrama; he was dark like a cloud. His lustre was mild; he had Śrīvatsa (mark) on his chest; and was adorned with lotuses and garland of wood-

flowers. He was having (i.e. had put on) many ornaments and was, as it were, the ocean full of jewels. His lustre was like that of a cloud with the flashing of the streak of lightning. On his (?) crown dwelt the highest soul Śārṅgapāṇi himself. On seeing him a living being is freed from the bondage of the worldly existence. In that city there was a great holy place called Mekhalā. By bathing there men always obtained the position of Viṣṇu. Having seen Narasiṁha, the lord of the world, the ocean of pity there, a man is free from a terrible sin committed during seven existences.

18-27. A man who sees the lord of gaṇas at Mekhalā always overcomes dangers, even though they are difficult to be overcome. In that Meghaṅkara (city) there lived an excellent brāhmaṇa who practised celibacy and self-control, who was free from the feeling of mineness and from egotism. He was well-known as Sunanda, and was proficient in the Vedas and in (other) holy texts. He had subjugated the group of his senses; he was highly devoted to Vāsudeva. O dear one, by the side of god Śārṅgin he recited this eleventh chapter (of the Gītā called) Manifestation of the Cosmic Form. The ascetic obtained knowledge of Brahman due to the power of the chapter. The meditating saint, enjoying liberation (even) while alive, desiring to reach a steady condition, always remained in profound intellectual meditation, praiseworthy due to the mass of great joy. Once that great meditating saint set out on a pilgrimage to Godāvarī when Jupiter was in the Zodiacal sign Leo. Having, on the first day, come to the excellent holy place Viraja, and having begun with the centre among the holy places, he bathed again and again, and saw Kamalā (i.e. Lakṣmī), the prop of the world. Having worshipped her, the great divine power, giving the fruit of all desires and then bathing at Tārātīrtha, then at the confluence of Kapilā, he visited the eight holy places. Then having offered oblations to the dead ancestors, having bowed to the lord of Kumārī, Śiva, he came to Kapilādvāra.

28-40. Having bathed there, and washed off the sins of former existences, having worshipped, saluted and heard (about) god Viṣṇu and having lived there for that night, he went with the brāhmaṇas from it in the morning. In the forest Narasiṁha there is at the holy place a well sacred to Rāma. Narasiṁha wor-

shipped by Prahlāda himself dwells there. Having seen that lord of gods, having devoutly worshipped him, and having passed the day there, he went to the city of Ambikā. Ambikā, showering grace on her devotees, dwells there. She fulfils all the desires of men. Having devoutly worshipped Ambikā with flowers and unguents, with various hymns, and salutations also, the brāhmaṇa then reached the city called Kaṇṭhasthāna in olden times. There the great power, Mahālakṣmī, of great lustre, dwells. Having seen her, having the orb of the brightness of nectar and the sun, the river of the nectar from lotuses cutting off the torment of the worldly existence, and served by royal swans of the lotuses of the hearts of best meditating saints, full of the sound produced without beating, and of the form having no second, having worshipped with a devout heart that revered Mahālakṣmī, giving desired objects, the lord of sages reached along with the brāhmaṇas, the city called Vivāhamaṇḍapa. In every house in the city he asked for taking shelter. The brāhmaṇa could not get lodging in any house. The head of the village showed to him a big temple to stay in. The brāhmaṇa entering it with his companions stayed there. Then when it was bright morning he saw from his place of lodging his body, where by chance all travellers were produced. When he was going, the village-head saw him coming (to him).

41-50a. The village-head said to him: "You are by all means a long-lived one. You are (the best) among the lucky, and (most) auspicious among the auspicious also. O child, you have some extraordinary power. Where have your companions gone? How did they get out of that house? See that, O best sage, I shall tell you. But I do not see here any other ascetic comparable to you. Do you know a great spell? Which science do you practise? Due to the kindness of which god have you this uncommon power? O best brāhmaṇa, then please stay in this village. O revered one, I shall render you every service." Speaking like this, he made the best sage stay in the village. He devoutly served him day and night. When seven or eight days passed, he came (to him). Having come to him in the morning, he, much grieved, wept before him. "The devout son of me who am luckless today, was eaten at night by a demon having bright fangs." When the protector (of the village) said like this, the restrained one

asked him: "Where is the demon? Tell me how your son was devoured."

The village-head said:

50b-59. In the city there is a terrible demon eating human beings. Everyday he comes and eats men frequenting the city. All the citizens formerly requested him: "O demon, protect us all. We shall arrange for your food. O demon, eat those travellers who sleep (here) at night." For protecting his life, he devoured the travellers that were ushered into this house by the village-head. You had slept in this house accompanied by other unlucky persons. They were eaten by him, and you were abandoned, O best brāhmaṇa. O best brāhmaṇa, you know your own power. Today a friend of my son has come. I, being ignorant, (i.e. unknowingly) put that dear (friend) of my son in the (same) house along with other travellers. Hearing that he was put into it, my son went to bring him at night. He too was eaten by the demon. I who was afflicted, said to the demon in the morning: "O wicked-minded one, at night you ate my son also. O demon, tell me if there is a means by which my son gone down into your belly will be revived."

The demon said:

60-63a. Through ignorance I devoured your son that has gone into (my belly). This your son was eaten by me through ignorance along with the travellers. Brahmā has also laid down (the way) in which he who has entered my belly, will be revived. By the power of the brāhmaṇa who constantly recites the eleventh chapter, I shall get salvation and the dead will be revived.

The village-head said:

63b-73. "How does the eleventh chapter have such wonderful power?" O brāhmaṇa, thus asked by me, the demon said: "Formerly some vulture going along the aerial path dropped from its beak a piece of bone somewhere in the water. Someone, best among the wise, having come to that lake, and taking it to be a great holy place, had offered oblations to the dead ancestors. All people said to him: 'Tell (us) how this is a holy place'. The restrained one muttered the eleventh chapter thrice a day.

The brāhmaṇa who had observed silence, was killed by thieves on the way. A piece of his bone fell from the vulture's beak into water. Due to that this has become a divine holy place destroying sins. Then all those men bathed there in that lake. Due to their being free from sins, they obtained the highest position. Owing to the power of the eleventh chapter, I too will get salvation, and the travellers will again come back to life. The brāhmaṇa spat out by me, will stay here only. If he constantly muttered the eleventh chapter, and if that best brāhmaṇa throws on me the water that is consecrated by the hymn of the eleventh chapter, then, undoubtedly I shall be free from the curse." Thus told by him, I have come to you.

The brāhmaṇa said:

74-89a. O protector (of the village), tell (me) due to what sin he had become a demon, eating men in the house at night.

The village-head said:

Formerly in this village there was a brāhmaṇa farmer. Once he was busy with the protection of the paddy-field. Not far from him, a great vulture devoured a traveller. An ascetic at a distance took pity on him to free him. Just then the bird ate up the traveller and went by the aerial path. Then the ascetic, through anger, said to the farmer: "O you wicked-minded, harsh-hearted, cruel ploughman, fie upon you who are selfish, averse to protecting others, and of an accursed life. One who though capable, ignores men being struck by thieves, wild boars, serpents, enemies, poisoned water, vultures, demons, evil spirits, goblins etc., would obtain the fruit of their murder. He who being capable, does not free a brāhmaṇa seized by thieves etc. goes to a horrible hell, and is again born as a wolf. He who (seeing one) being killed (or) harassed by a vulture or a tiger in a forest, says 'Leave (him), leave (him)', goes to the highest position. Those also who are killed while (protecting) cows by tigers, hunters or wicked kings, go to Viṣṇu's position, difficult to be obtained even by meditating saints. Thousands of horse-sacrifices and hundreds of Vājapeya sacrifices are not worth even a sixteenth part of the protection of one seeking shelter. Even a meritorious person, by ignoring a helpless and a fright-

ened person, is roasted in the Kumbhīpāka (hell) after (some) time. Since you were unkind, as you on seeing the traveller (being) eaten by the wicked vulture, did not ward off (the vulture) though you were capable of warding it off, you will be (born as) a demon." Having heard this curse of the sage, the ploughman, with his body trembling, saluted the brāhmaṇa and said (these) piteous words: "With my eyes cast on protecting the field here, I did not notice this man being killed by the vulture. Therefore, please favour me who am helpless."

The brāhmaṇa said:

89b-91. When the water consecrated by him who knows the eleventh chapter (of the Gītā) and mutters it everyday, falls on your head, then you will be free from the curse.

Speaking like this the ascetic left, and the ploughman became a demon. Therefore, O brāhmaṇa, come on; consecrate him with (the recitation of) that chapter. Drop with your (own) hand the holy water on his head.

Mahādeva said:

92-108b. Having heard this request of him, the sage, full of pity, saying 'All right' went with the head of the village near the demon. The brāhmaṇa, the meditating saint, dropped on his head the water consecrated with (the recitation of) the eleventh chapter (called) Viśvarūpa (-darśana). By the power of the chapter of the Gītā, he obtained freedom from the curse. Abandoning the body of the demon he became one having four arms. Those men, the travellers who were ejected, were in thousands. They became four-armed ones holding conches, discs and maces. They got into aeroplanes. At that time he said to the demon: "O demon, which is my son. Show him (to me)." Thus addressed by the village-head, the demon of divine intellect said: "Know your son to be four-armed like these and having dark lustre like the tamāla tree and having a crown of rubies, and adorned with divine, jewelled ear-rings, with great shoulders charming due to a necklace, and adorned with a golden armlet, having lotus-like eyes, affectionate, and holding a lotus in his hand, having got into a divine aeroplane, and having obtained godhead." Hearing

these words of him, and seeing his son like that, he started taking him home. Then the son laughed (and said): "O protector (of the village), for how many times have you become my son? Formerly I was your son, (but) now I am a god. Due to the brāhmaṇa's favour I shall go to Viṣṇu's abode. See this demon also has secured a four-armed body. Due to the greatness of the eleventh (chapter) he will go to heaven with (these) people. Learn the chapter from this brāhmaṇa and constantly mutter it. There is no doubt that you will obtain the same position. Therefore, O father, the company of the good is always difficult to be had by men. That too has come up for you today. Accomplish your desired object. What is the use of wealth, enjoyment, gifts, sacrifices, penance, acts of pious liberality? Final bliss is obtained by the recital of the (chapter called) Viśvarūpa(-darśana). By hearing the chapter (men see) that form of Viṣṇu which is the highest, which came out of the mouth of Kṛṣṇa, the Brahman, the mass of complete joy, which—the nectar of salvation—was spoken by him to his friend Arjuna on Kurukṣetra, which removes maladies, diseases and fears of men afraid of the mundane existence, which destroys the misery of many existences. I do not see any other (hymn) like that. Remember it."

Śiva said:

108c-110. Speaking like this, he went to Viṣṇu's highest position with them. The village-head learnt that chapter from the brāhmaṇa. Due to its greatness both of them went to Viṣṇu's position. Thus I have told you the account of the eleventh chapter, by merely hearing which great sins perish.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED EIGHTYSIX

The Greatness of the Twelfth Chapter: Siddhasamādhi's Story

Mahādeva said:

1-11. In the southern country there is a city named Kolhāpura. O good one, it is the abode of pleasures, and the source of accomplishment of superhuman powers for the good ones. It is a great seat of the Parāśakti (Supreme Power), and is resorted to by all gods. It is well-known in the Purāṇas as giving enjoyments and salvation. There are crores of holy places there, and crores of phalluses of Śiva. There is Rudragayā. It is large and well-known in the world. The ramparts are like high mountains, and the banners on the gates are shining. On the top of the palace there is a high golden banner. The city is adorned with a row of high mansions and topmost of the houses resembling the moon. The quarters were made fragrant with the smoke of the incense coming out of the holes of windows. It has a great shadow due to the moving banners. It is endowed with temples. It is inhabited by clever, handsome, affectionate, rich, pure men, of good conduct and having many ornaments. Women live there, whose eyes are like those of deer, whose faces resemble the moon, whose hair is curly, who resemble the blooming campaka, whose breasts are stout and high, who are adorned with deep navels and three folds (on their bellies), whose hips are large, whose pairs of shanks are charming, whose feet are excellent, whose girdles are making sounds, whose jewelled anklets are jingling, whose lotus-like hands have bracelets that are tinkling, and the rays from whose nails are flashing, and that fascinate even sages. The city is endowed with all objects, and full of all enjoyments. It possesses all auspicious things, and has Mahālakṣmī (living in it).

12-33. There came some young, fair man of charming eyes. His neck was conch-like; his shoulders were broad; his chest was large; his arms were long. He was endowed with all (good) marks; was fair and handsome in all limbs. Entering the city he saw the beauty in all the high mansions. His mind was eager to see Mahālakṣmī, the chief goddess. He bathed in Maṇikuṇḍa and offered oblations to his dead ancestors. Having seen Mahā-

lakṣmī, Mahāmāyā, he devoutly praised her. "The mother of the world, the protector, having infinite pity, brings about by her glance the existence and protection of the world. Lord Brahmā ordered by that Power creates (the world). Viṣṇu depending upon that Power, maintains the world. Śiva being entered by that Power destroys everything. I worship that great Power, mighty due to her creating, maintaining and destroying (the world). O you whose lotus-like feet are meditated upon by meditating ascetics, O Kamalā, O you having a lotus as your abode, You grasp all our innate properties within the range of the senses. You alone are the mass of thoughts. You make the mind fit for that. You are of the form of desires, knowledge and acts. You are of the form of the highest consciousness. You desire no fruit; you are spotless; you are eternal; you are formless; you are unstained. You are constant; you are free from agony; you are independent; you are free from disease. Who is capable of describing your greatness like this? I salute you, moving in the twelve (months) after disclosing the collection of the six (seasons). You are of the nature of anāhata śabda* (sound produced without beating); you are of the nature of nāda*, bindu* and kalā*. O mother, you are the river of the nectar oozing from the full moon. O affectionate one, you nourish children like Sanaka etc. who are naked. You are auspicious, consciousness attached to (the states of) waking, dream and deep sleep. You are in the fourth state; you are in the combination of pity and courteous language. To all living beings the entire wealth of Brahman is given by you who are beyond the fourth state after having withdrawn the group of all the reals. By you who are indeterminate, identity with bimba (?) is granted to the yogins. I salute the Parā, Paśyantī, Madhyamā and Vaikharī (the four kinds of vāc—speech) also. O goddess, for the proper protection of the world you take up (various) forms. You are Brāhmī, Vaiṣṇavī, Māheśī, O mother. O Vārāhī, you are Mahālakṣmī, Nārasiṁhī and Aindrikā. You are Kaumārī, Caṇḍikā, Lakṣmī, the purifier of everything; you are Sāvitrī, the mother of the world, Śaśinī and Rohiṇī. You are Svāhā, Svadhā; you are the divine nectar. You are Durgā; you are adorned

*These terms are highly technical in Tantra.

with a mass of clubs and staff-like arms. O you with your eyes reeling due to drinking blood dropping from the body of Raktabīja (a demon), O you having the strong pair of arms taken out from the neck of an intoxicated he-buffalo, O you who put in great valour in tearing the great demon called Śumbha, O you having unlimited acts, O you mother of the three worlds, I salute you. O you wish-fulfilling tree to your devotees, O you goddess, favour me." Thus praised by him goddess Mahālakṣmī then took up her own form and spoke to that man.

Śrī Lakṣmī said:

34a. O prince, I am pleased, ask for an excellent boon.

The prince said:

34b-40a. My father, a king, while performing a great horse-sacrifice, was unfortunately overcome by a disease and died. Having dried his body with heated oil, I have kept it. The sacrifice continued as before. The horse that had wandered over the earth, (was tied) to a post. Someone at night cut off the bond and took him somewhere. When (my) men after not finding him, came back, I, addressing all priests, have sought your refuge. O goddess, if you are pleased, then may my horse of the sacrifice be seen, so that the sacrifice will be completed and my father, the king, will be free from debt. O mother of the world, O you who love those who seek your refuge, do like that.

The goddess said:

40b-42. A brāhmaṇa, known as Siddhasamādhi, is at my door. By my order he will accomplish all your work.

Thus addressed by Śrī Mahālakṣmī, the prince then came to the place where the sage Siddhasamādhi was. Having saluted his lotus-like feet, he stood there with his palms joined.

43-60. Then the brāhmaṇa said to him: "You are sent by Ambā. See, I shall accomplish all that is desired by you." Speaking like this, the māntrika (knower of spells) drew (to his presence) all gods. The son of the king then saw the gods having joined their palms and with their bodies trembling. Then the best brāhmaṇa spoke to all the gods: "This prince's horse

meant for a sacrifice was snatched and taken away at night by the lord of gods. O gods, bring (back) his horse, do not delay." Having heard the sage's words, the gods gave him (back) the horse. He allowed the gods (to go). Having seen the gods drawn (by him), and having received the lost horse, the king's son bowed to the sage, and said to him: "O best sage, this your power is a wonder. You have done a marvel by drawing on the gods in a moment. Having drawn the horse give me (back) my horse meant for the sacrifice. There is nothing else which is difficult to be done even by gods. You alone, and none else, will be capable of doing it. O brāhmaṇa, listen. My father was king Bṛhadratha. He commenced a horse-sacrifice, but died through (bad) luck. Even now his body lies, dried with heated oil. O best one, please bring him back to life again." "We shall go there where (the body of) your father is, and where your sacrificial hall is." Having come (there) along with that Siddhasamādhi, he consecrated water and threw it on the head of the dead body. Then the king got (back) consciousness, and saw (the people there). The king asked him: "O Dharma (i.e. pious one), who are you?" Then the prince told everything to the king. The king saluted the brāhmaṇa who had given (back) his life again. He said: "Due to which religious merit have you this uncommon power by means of which you gave (back) my life and called the gods, and also by means of which (power) you rescued the sacrifice? Tell (me) that". Being thus addressed, the brāhmaṇa spoke in soft words. "I carefully mutter the twelfth chapter of the Gītā. Due to that (I have) this power by means of which you (re-)gained life."

61-62. Hearing these words the king learnt the excellent twelfth chapter from that brāhmaṇa sage along with brāhmaṇas. Due to the greatness of that chapter all of them obtained good position. Other living beings also, after having recited it, obtained great salvation.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED EIGHTYSEVEN

The Thirteenth Chapter: Durācārā's Story

The goddess said:

1. You told me the greatness of the twelfth chapter. Tell me the very beautiful greatness of the thirteenth chapter.

The lord said:

2-22. O Pārvatī, listen to the greatness—a treasure—of the thirteenth chapter, by merely hearing which you will get great joy. In the southern country there is the great river Tuṅgabhadrā. On her bank is a charming city named Harihara, where, O goddess, revered god Harihara himself dwells. By seeing him (a man) gets great happiness. In that city lived a brāhmaṇa named Hari Dīkṣita. He was engrossed in penance and sacred study. He was learned and had mastered the Vedas. His wife was Durācārā (literally 'of bad conduct') both in name and deeds. She who used abusive language, never slept with her husband. She, wandering wantonly, did not remain in her house even for a moment. At the door of the brāhmaṇa she drank liquor (filling her belly up) to her throat (i.e. too much). She repeatedly threatened her husband's relatives. Always intoxicated, she constantly dallied with her paramours. Sometime seeing the city full of citizens here and there, she herself made a rendezvous in a forest. The clever one, proud of her youth, passed a long time there only dallying with her paramours. When she was (thus) living in the city wantonly, the spring season, the friend of Cupid, set in. It was full of foliage from roots (of trees); it had brought back to life Cupid by means of the cooings of the cuckoos in the fifth note (of the Indian gamut) due to the mango tree liable to change(?). It had tossed the forest-trees with breezes coming from the Malaya (mountain) carrying the fragrance of campaka flowers and blowing very gently. It was beautified all around by sound due to hummings of the swarms of bees breaking their fast with the fragrant spirituous liquor of the blooming jasmine flowers. It was smiling with the pleasing, charming, fragrant lakes. It was manifested by lakes with hosts of swans collected (there). In it the earth was

beautified with trees having dense foliage and having (under them) young ones of deer seated comfortably in their dense shade. In that spring season that lady going to meet her lover (*Abhisārikā*), being delighted, saw, at night the moonlight, giving joy to the world. It had thin drops of nectar dropping from the ends of the beaks of the moving cakoras. It was full of springs of nectar oozing from the melting moon-stone. In it the mass of hail was clustering together in the expanding middle parts of the flowers; the billows of the mass of water that were flashing, embraced the sky. It was a knife cutting the throats of unchaste women of the great lion of Cupid. It was clever in tearing off the mass of dense darkness. It was full of snow (or coolness) for others like the Himālaya mountain that had whitened Satī. It gave joy to the young people, due to the closing of withered lotuses. It was the witness to the piteous wailings of the female cakravākas. It had brightened the atmosphere with pure rays like a row of pearls.

23-33. When the moonlight became profuse and filled the ten quarters, the lustful woman became blind with passion, and she, amusing herself in the high mansion, not seeing her paramours on the way at night, and breaking the bolt of (the door of) the house, went out of the city, to the place of appointment. She, with her mind deluded by passion of love, looking for one of her lovers, did not see any (lover) in any bower or under any tree. At every step she heard the gentle words of her lover. Then she playfully went to that place where there was a destructive sound. Having heard the notes of the cakravākas, she, misunderstanding them for the words of her lover, again and again moved to all lakes. Through error (that it was) her lover, she awakened the flocks of deer asleep at the root of a tree, saying, with encouragement, 'I have come'. Taking a branchless trunk for the lord of her life she embraced it, and kissed a blooming lotus mistaking it for his face. Everywhere her exertion was futile. She did not see her lover. Swooning, she lamented in the grove with various words. 'O you of a charming fortune, O you treasure of fortune and handsomeness, O you having a face like the full moon, O you having eyes like lotuses, O dear one, O you full of virtues, O you who are a celestial tree where fulness relaxes, if, through anger, you are remaining somewhere in dis-

guise, I propitiate you, O dear one, even by offering my dear life.' Thus through separation (from her lover) she lamented in all directions.

34-49. Having heard her words, a tiger, who was asleep, awoke. He growled, and angrily looked in every direction along the path. Striking the ground with his nails and roaring in the sky-cavern, he speedily raised his tail suspended from the back. The tiger jumped and went where the abhisārikā was. She too, mistaking him, who was coming (to her), for her lord (i.e. paramour) went with her mind full of love to stand by him. Then blinded by the cruel sport of his nails, she gave up the idea of his being her lover on hearing his loud roar. Even though the woman was (reduced to a condition) like that, she quickly gave up her wrong notion (and said): "O tiger, for what purpose have you come here to kill me? Tell me all this for which you wish to kill me." Hearing these words of her, the tiger of violent strides, for a moment left the food (in the form) of her, laughed and said: "In the southern country there is a river named Malāpahā. On her bank is a city called Muniparṇā. There Maheśvara Pañcaliṅga actually dwells. In that city, I, being the son of a brāhmaṇa, lived. I acted as a priest for those not entitled to performing a sacrifice. On the bank of the river I ate (food) at a śrāddha performed for one definite individual. With a desire for (obtaining) wealth, I always sold the fruit of the recital of the Veda. Through greed I condemned other mendicants with bad words. I always accepted wealth not fit to be given and that was not given. Through the desire to seize the opportunity, I deceived all people. Then after some time I became old. I had wrinkles (on my body), grey hair, and being blind, stumbled and fell. My teeth had fallen, (but) again I was absorbed in accepting gifts. Through greed of getting wealth, I, wandering on the parvan days, and with darbhas in my hands, went near a holy place. Then I, with my limbs having become loose, went to the house of a brāhmaṇa to ask for food, but in the middle (i.e. while on my way) I was bitten on my leg by a dog. Fainting I fell on the ground in a moment. Then losing my life, I went to the stock of a tiger.

50-61. Remembering my former sin I live in this forest. I do not eat religious sages and good men and chaste women. But

I devour sinners, wicked ones, and unchaste women. Therefore, I shall really eat you, O unchaste woman." Saying so, he, cutting her limbs into pieces with his cruel nails, devoured her who had resorted to a sinful body. Yama's servants took her to Yama's city, and there by Yama's order quickly dropped her many times into the fierce yellow pools full of feces, urine and blood for crores of kalpas; and again and again bringing her from there, they put her into Raurava hell for a period of hundreds of periods of Manu. Even after dragging her from there, they threw her, fully helpless, weeping, with her hair loose, limbs broken, into fire. Thus, having experienced the fierce torment in the hell, wholly sinful, she was again born on the earth in the stock of cāṇḍāla. Then, in the cāṇḍāla-house also, she growing day by day, was as before due to (the effect of) her former deeds. Then after some time she went to her house, where, goddess Jṛmbhakā of Śiva, the goddess of the city, was. There she saw a pure brāhmaṇa, Vāsudeva by name, constantly reciting the thirteenth chapter of the Gītā. Then merely on hearing it, she was free from the body of cāṇḍāla, and getting a divine body, she went to heaven.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED EIGHTYEIGHT

The Fourteenth Chapter: Story of a Bitch and a Hare

The lord said:

1-9. O Bhavānī, for freedom from the worldly existence, I shall hereafter narrate (the importance of) the fourteenth chapter of the Gītā. O you of a pleasing smile, listen to it. On the earth there is a large region of Kāśmīra; it is the charming capital of goddess Sarasvatī. After staying there the goddess of speech goes to Brahmā's world after mounting her swan. There the quarter attains importance after serving Sarasvatī's lotus-like feet with saffron sent by Sāvitrī and rising from the folds of the wings of the swan. Due to having no interruption the langu-

age of gods is in a moment got by men who speak Sanskrit. In the morning the orbs of the moon and of the sun have a tawny tinge due to saffron rising from the courtyard of the house. There was king Śauryavarman, a heap of lustre, who had cut off the circle of his enemies with volleys of bright arrows that were ready. In Siṁhaladvīpa there was a king, brave like a lion, named Vikramavetāla, also a treasure of arts. Gradually they increased the friendship of each other by means of heaps (of) excellent (presents) produced in their respective countries.

10-17. Once, king Vikramavetāla saw a perfect pair of bitches sent with love by Śauryavarman. He sent to his friend Śauryavarman intoxicated excellent elephants, horses, jewelled ornaments and chowries. Once, the king, eager for hunting having got into a palanquin, being fanned by charming chowries, taking the pair of the bitches tied with golden chain, and with a collection of musical instruments and small drums went with the princes to a forest. A hare was taken as a prey for the wager. There was a great noise made by the princes. Then the king laying a high-priced wager with a prince of his age sported with eagerness. Then the king, having taken down the bitch from the palanquin, set her after the hare, running fast. The prince, of great arms, also released his object of love. Having loudly repeated the panegyric or laudatory poem he stopped the bitch.

18-28. While all the kings were witnessing, the pair of the bitches was running with a speed that could not be perceived and was jumping. Due to great exertion the hare fell into a great ditch. Though fallen the hare could not be overpowered by the bitch. Then the hare, slowly getting up, vomitting foam, was angrily overpowered and seized by the king's bitch. Then the hare who somehow jumped and was going, tumbled and was seized at the neck by the king's bitch. In the din of the people, talking 'We have won' the hare got out of the mouth of the bitch that was frightened. Then the hare, having blood (on his body) that was dropping and that was caused by the line of the wounds (made) by the teeth (of the bitch), hid in a place rustling (with leaves etc.) and remained (there). He who, being just seen by the king's bitch, smelling that part of the land with great anger, was frightened, and went (from there to a distance)

of just a cubit, to a place where the wind coming from the camphor and plantain trees and the bottom of the tiger's caves and kissing the cheeks of the Cola-ladies, blew. There the deer, with their eyes partially closed due to the pollen from the cups of the ketakī flowers that had opened up, confidently resorted to the shade. There the monkeys also, satisfied with the ripe mangoes, fell down along with the coconuts. There even lions played with the young elephants; serpents entered fearlessly into the peacocks' tails.

29-36. There in a hermitage a brāhmaṇa named Vatsa, who had curbed his senses and was tranquil, lived, constantly muttering the fourteenth chapter. (The hare) going here, with his life just sustained and repeatedly panting, fell into the mud caused by the water (poured) by his disciple while washing his lotus-like feet. The hare, having crossed the mundane existence just due to the contact with that mud, got into a divine aeroplane and went to heaven. Then that bitch also, with her body besmeared with a few drops of mud and free from hunger and thirst, abandoned her canine form, got into a celestial aeroplane charming with divine ladies and adorned with gandharvas, went to heaven. Then his intelligent disciple named Svakandhara, amazed after thinking about the cause of the enmity in the former existence, laughed. The king, an ocean of modesty alone, with his eyes smiling, also saluted him with great devotion and asked him, "O brāhmaṇa, tell me the story, how the two ignorant ones, the bitch and the young hare, that had resorted to a mean stock, went to heaven."

The disciple said:

37-39. In this forest there is a brāhmaṇa named Vatsa, with his senses curbed. He always mutters the fourteenth chapter. O king, I am his disciple, proficient in every (branch of) knowledge. Everyday I mutter the fourteenth chapter, O king. O king, the hare along with the bitch, rolling in the water (used) for washing my feet, went to heaven.

The king said:

40. O best brāhmaṇa, with what intention did you, thinking carefully that it has some meaning, laugh?

The disciple said:

41-45. There was a great city named Pratyudaka in Mahārāṣṭra. There was a brāhmaṇa named Keśava, a leader of gamblers. His wife was Vilobhanā, a wanton woman. He through anger, and remembering the enmity of the (former) birth, killed her. Then due to the sin of the murder of a woman, the brāhmaṇa was born as a hare, and she due to her birth (full) of deceit, was born as a bitch. They, taking different births, never forgot the enmity practised in the former birth, and each other also.

The king, full of faith, having understood all this, studied the entire Gītā, and got the highest position.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED EIGHTYNINE

The Fifteenth Chapter: *The Story of King Narasiṁsha*

The lord said:

1-11. O you large-eyed one, O you daughter of the Himālaya mountain, I shall tell (you) the importance of the fifteenth chapter of the Gītā. Listen to it. In the Gauḍa country there was a kind king named Narasiṁha. In the war by the edge of his sword the divine groups were killed. The earth could bear the agony due to the heat of the sun, even in summer, by means of the water of the stream of rut of his intoxicated elephants. Intoxicated elephants, frightened due to being challenged and seeking his refuge, shone like moving mountains. The mountains respectfully echoed the trumpets of the intoxicated elephants of him, the kind protector. It was a wonder how the earth was not reduced to pieces, when it was shattered with the multitudes of (the strokes of) the hoofs of his running horses. When he, a friend of Indra, emancipated the earth, Phaṇīśvara (Śeṣa; Patañjali) again brightened Mahābhāṣya. He had an intelligent soldier named Sarabhabheruṇḍa, who was an abode of weapons, holy texts and arts, and had large round arms. By means of his trea-

sure, horses, brave soldiers, and very inaccessible forts he was equal to the king. Some time the sinful one made up his mind to rule over the kingdom after having forcibly killed the king together with the princes. With a desire to do like this he was determined (to kill the king with the princes). Due to the disease of cholera he died.

12-26. O you of a thin belly, after death the sinful one was born, due to that act, as a bright horse in Sindhu country. A certain vaiśya-son, knowing the facts about horses, bought him at a great price and took him (to his place) with great effort. After his death the king got old in course of time and looked after his kingdom with (the help of) his grandsons. The vaiśya-son came to give the horse to the king. He remained at the king's door waiting to meet him. Though the vaiśya was already known, he was presented (before the king) by the doorkeeper. "Speak why (you have come)." Thus asked by the king, he told (everything) clearly. "Thinking that this horse is a gem of the three worlds, I (bought) this horse of auspicious marks at a price of a million coins." Then looking at the faces of those seated by his side, the king ordered the vaiśya: "Bring the horse here." The great horse made the heads of those knowing the marks of a horse, nod, and exciting the minds of the brave, ejecting hisvery bright fame earned by many speedy runs across, the entire earth, as it were, in the form of saliva and foam, he actually became comparable to Uccaiḥśravas by means of the similarity in virtues (with him). The very bright one bent his neck, as it were, through bashfulness. Constantly being fanned by chowries, white like the moon, he was like Uccaiḥśravas, unsteady like the Milky Ocean. Like the beauty of the clouds he had a pair of blue umbrellas, and the beauty of the peak of the Himālaya, with clouds touching it. Repeatedly raising his handsome neck, he was, as it were, turned into fire by the contact with the earth. He tore all the enemies; he brought prosperity in the form of victory with his loud neighing; he declared glory in (all) quarters. He was a very high heap of vitality; was, as it were, the treasure of gaits. He was actually the abode of beauty; he was the ocean of (auspicious) marks.

27-40. The vaiśya brought the horse; and the king saw him. The ministers knowing the (auspicious) marks described him in

various ways. Giving the merchant as much gold as desired and aked for by him, the king, full of extreme joy, quickly took the horse. Then having called the horsegroom, and carefully instructing him the king dismissed the assembly and went into his house after being taken leave of in many ways by (the members of) the assembly. He (took) the king, having the ornaments in the form of rows of scars of wounds made in battle, and resembling sattva (energy?). Once, the king, full of curiosity, having the sport of hunting (in mind), mounted him, and entered a forest. Leaving his soldiers behind, all of whom were running around, the king, being attracted by deer, was oppressed with thirst. Then the king got down from the horse, and looking for water, tied the horse to the branch of a tree, and ascended a rock. He saw half the verse from the fifteenth chapter of the Gītā written, and fallen where he looked into a fissure. When the king was reading the line of letters, the horse, hearing it, obtained salvation, and quickly fell. Then having cut off the knot, and dropping the saddle, he, being lifted by the king did not get up, (but) was dead. Then Sarabhabheruṇḍa, talking to the king in a sweet tone, got into a celestial aeroplane, and went to heaven. Then going up the mountain, he saw an excellent hermitage. It was full of the trees of punnāga, plantain, mango and coconut. It had groves of grapes and sugarcanes, and trees like nuts, nāgakesara and campaka. It had young elephants and deer playing in it. It had the flocks of peacocks dancing. The king, being free from the desire for worldly existence, saluted the brāhmaṇa who was in the hut, and asked him with great devotion:

41-46. "(Please) tell me, with what purpose the horse went to heaven." Having heard these words of the king, the brāhmaṇa said: "Due to his sin, he became a horse after a long time. Having heard half a verse from the fifteenth chapter of the Gītā written somewhere, when you read it, the horse went to heaven." Then the king, surrounded by his attendants who had come there, with horripilation due to joy, saluted the brāhmaṇa and left. The king, with his eyes dilating due to joy, read that writing having (half the verse from) the fifteenth (chapter) of the Gītā and he, along with the ministers, the counsellors, consecrated his son powerful like a lion, on the throne, and he of a pure mind, obtained salvation.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED NINETY

The Sixteenth Chapter: Khaḍgabāhu's Story

The lord said:

1-9. Hereafter I shall narrate the greatness of the sixteenth chapter. Hear it, O fawn-eyed one, O you showering joy and eagerness. In the Gurjara country there was a city by name Saurāṣṭrika. There lived a king Khaḍgabāhu by name. He was, as it were, another moon. The ocean is made fragrant by the string of the fragrance of his flowers and Viṣṇu with Lakṣmī sleeps comfortably in it. The particles of the camphor of his fame shine in the sky, under the pretext of stars, after they were scattered there by the sighs of his enemies. Kings among his enemies who had bathed in the holy place of the edge of his sword, (though) fascinated by the words of divine women, even now turn back from heaven. He had an elephant named Arimardana. He was unrestrained due to rut. He had swarms of bees (hovering round and) humming in the water of the flowing ichor. It shone like mount Añjana with the springs rising, turbid due to being the water in the form of the stream of ichor crossing his large temples. In the interior of the forest the chowries bright like the moonlight shone on his limbs like the rays of the moon falling on them. He looked splendid with his temples shining with the cover of the particles of red lead. He was like a portion of the sky pervaded with the evening clouds.

10-22. Once, at night, he freed himself from the chains and fetters and forcibly broke the iron pillar (to which he was tied) and went out. Angrily ignoring all the hosts of drivers flashing the goads by his side, he broke his abode, though he was being struck in various ways with bamboo sticks to which goads were fixed, and though the drivers frightened him much. Then on hearing this wonder came there the king with those adept in the art of (the marks of) elephants and with princes. Having come (there) the king saw the mighty elephant stupefying the pride of brave heroes and taking away rows of lofty mansions. The citizens, turning away from any other curiosity and through fear guarding their children, looked at the very fierce elephant by keeping themselves at a distance. The paths were made fragrant

by the drops of his rut and blocked by people intent on fleeing. Then a brāhmaṇa, after having bathed and muttering certain verses from the sixteenth chapter of the Gītā, came along the path, though he was prohibited in many ways by the citizens and the drivers of elephants. Not caring for those who were scared of the elephant, he walked on. The elephant covered the people with hissings and crushed them. The brāhmaṇa touched his ichor and went happily. Even when the citizens were watching, there arose a great wonder in the mind of the king which cannot be grasped by words. Then getting down from his horse, saluting the brāhmaṇa. the king asked him:

The king said:

23-24. O brāhmaṇa, today you have done a great, uncommon thing. How did you pass by the elephant resembling Death? Which god do you worship? Which hymn do you mutter, O lord? Which divine power do you possess? Tell it, O brāhmaṇa.

The brāhmaṇa said:

25-34. O king, everyday I mutter a few verses from the sixteenth chapter of the Gītā. All these divine powers are due to that.

Then leaving the elephant, the interesting object of curiosity, the king, taking the brāhmaṇa with him, came home. Having pleased the best brāhmaṇa at an auspicious time with golden coins numbering a lakh, he received from him the Gītā-hymn. The curious king also studied with reverence, a few verses from the sixteenth chapter of the Gītā. Once, with his soldiers, he went out of the city. Clearly not caring for the pleasures of the kingdom, he let loose the intoxicated elephant from his driver. The king offered his life like grass before the elephant. The king, the leader of the daring ones, took him, of large temples and unrestrained due to the line of the rut, and due to his confidence in his ministers came there. The king got away from the elephant as the moon would come out of Rāhu's mouth or a righteous person from the mouth of Death or a good one from that of a wicked one. Having come to the city, the king consecrat-

ed his son (on the throne), and due to the muttering of the sixteenth chapter, obtained the best position.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED NINETYONE

The Seventeenth Chapter: Duḥśāsana's Story

The lord said:

1-9. I told you the power of the sixteenth chapter. Now listen clearly, O Śiva, to the greatness of the seventeenth chapter. Duḥśāsana was a servant of Khaḍgabāhu's son. He came to seize that elephant and was killed by the elephant. With his mind fixed on that desire, he obtained the stock of the elephant, (but)obtained the highest position on listening to the seventeenth chapter of the Gītā.

The goddess said:

I have heard that Duḥśāsana became an elephant and was released. O auspicious lord, tell me that only in detail.

The lord said:

There was a certain wicked-minded man. He laid a high-priced wager with the feudal princes and then mounted upon an elephant. The fool named Duḥśāsana, having gone a few steps only, (though) warded off by people, uttered audacious words. Then the elephant, hearing them, was blind with fury. With the princes trembling, he, with his steps stumbling, fell down. Then the elephant, unrestrained like death, angrily uprooted something panting and fallen. The mad elephant separating his bones, even though he was already dead, scattered them.

10-17. Then having died in course of time, he obtained the stock of elephant. He passed a long time (like that). The king of Siṁhaladvīpa had a close friendship with king Khaḍgabāhu. Then the honoured elephant was sent by the water-route by Jayadeva to Khaḍgabāhu. That king also took him with joy. Remembering his previous existence, and seeing his kinsmen and

his brothers, he passed a few days with great grief. Not showing (any recognition) he quietly lived in Khaḍgabāhu's house. He, some time being pleased by the completing of an incomplete stanza (in a contest) (by a poet) gave the poet the elephant as a present. The poet, being afraid of a harm from a disease, sold the temple-elephant to the Mālava king for a hundred (coins). After some time had passed, the elephant suffering from fever due to old age difficult to be enjoyed, was on the point of dying. The elephant did not smell cold water, nor did he take a morsel; he did not sleep comfortably, but shed tears only.

18-27. Then hearing the account told by the elephant-driver, the king came where the elephant suffering from fever, lay. The elephant too, seeing the king, gave up the agony due to the fever, and spoke in a voice causing wonder to the world. "O king, O you who know all sacred texts, O you ocean of the science of politics, O you who have vanquished the host of your enemies, O you to whom Viṣṇu's feet are dear, what is the use of medicines, shoots, and mutterings of hymns? Bring a brāhmaṇa who would mutter the seventeenth chapter of the Gītā. There is no doubt that my disease will end due to that." The king did as was told by the elephant. Then Duḥśāsana gave up his state as an elephant, and got release. When the brāhmaṇa had thrown consecrated water on the excellent one, the king saw that Duḥśāsana, lustrous like Indra, got into a divine aeroplane.

The king said:

Tell me what your caste is, who you are, what your livelihood is. Due to what act did you become an elephant? How did you come here?

Asked by the king, Duḥśāsana who was freed, remaining in the aeroplane, told in definite words his account. Then the lord of Mālava, muttering the seventeenth chapter of the Gītā, was released after a short time.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED NINETYTWO

The Eighteenth Chapter: A Brāhmaṇa Becomes Indra

Pārvatī said:

1. O Śiva, you have told me the greatness of the seventeenth chapter. (Now) tell me the importance of the eighteenth chapter.

The lord said:

2-15a. O you daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, listen to the greatness of the eighteenth chapter which is holy, which is the essence of all holy texts, which is the elixir that has come to the ears, which is intent on tearing off the mass of pangs in the worldly existence, which is the great secret of the siddhas, which is capable of uprooting ignorance, which is vitality, which is the best, the highest position of Kaiṭabha's enemy (i.e. Viṣṇu), which is the root of the creeper of discretion, which removes the dirt of passion and anger, which gave repose to the hearts of gods like Indra, which amused the minds of the great meditating saints like Sanaka, which has given a setback to the roars of Yama merely by its being recited, which is the cause of uprooting the roots of one hundred and eight diseases. O you whose gait is like that of an elephant, there is no greater secret than this. It removes the three (kinds of) torments and destroys major sins. As I am eternal among times, as the desire-yielding cow is among the beasts, as Vyāsa is among the best sages, or as he who knows Brahman is among the Vyāsas, as Indra is among gods, as Guru (i.e. Bṛhaspati) is superior to Śukra, as among the liquids nectar is the best and well-known in the world, as Kailāsa is among mountains, and as Indra is among gods, as Puṣkara is among the holy places, as lotus is among flowers, as in the worlds Arundhatī is among the chaste and virtuous wives, as the horse-sacrifice is among the sacrifices, as Paradise is among the gardens, as among all Rudras is my follower Vīrabhadra, as a gift of land is among gifts, as Godāvārī is among rivers, as Harikṣetra is recommended for all religious rites, so is the greatness of the eighteenth chapter excellent in the world. About it, O Pārvatī, listen devoutly to this auspicious

account, so that by merely listening to it a being is free from sins.

15b-28. On the peak of Meru there was a beautiful city (named) Amarāvatī. It was formerly fashioned for my amusement by Viśvakarman. It is always full of virtues, and resorted to by crores of gods. There, palaces giving desired objects and built with desire-yielding stones, excel. It (spread) up to the city of Brahmā. It possessed a mass of lustre, and is well-known like the knowledge of the Supreme Spirit. There happily sitting under the shade of the desire-yielding tree Śacī enjoyed the song sung by gandharva women. The divine river there turned bloody due to the billows of the blood of the demons whose lives were crushed by gods. There the gods, repeatedly remembering the ancient sweet ambrosia, and being emaciated with hunger, everyday drank the digit of the moon. In it, resembling final beatitude, formerly lived Indra. The prosperous one was accompanied by Śacī, and was waited upon by all gods. When once he was seated comfortably he saw a great man having a thousand eyes, waited upon by Viṣṇu's messengers, coming (to him). Then due to his lustre Indra was overpowered. He quickly fell into the hall from his jewelled throne. When he went away from the throne, Viṣṇu's soldiers tied him with the strap of the sovereignty over the gods. Pulomajā quickly sat on the left lap of that great Indra who was consecrated to the accompaniment of sounds of drums. Then gods along with their wives sang divine songs. The celestial ladies waved lights before him. Then sages gave him blessings with (hymns from) the Vedas. The bands of celestial nymphs like Rambhā danced before him. Gandharvas sang charming songs with auspicious desires.

29-44. Thus they served the new Indra who had not performed a hundred sacrifices. Seeing that old Indra was amazed. "By me (him?) lakes were never fashioned on the path; trees giving rest to travellers were never planted. God Tripurabhairava (i.e. Śiva) was never seen. Goddess Madālasā living in the place of treasure was never worshipped. Śārṅgadhara residing at Meghaṅkara was never seen. A bath was never taken at Viraja. The city of Kāśī was never visited. Narahari himself residing at the divine grove was never seen. Eraṇḍa Viṣṇu Heramba(?) was never contemplated upon. Mother Reṇukā living in the city was never seen. The

goddess living at Dānāpura was never devoutly worshipped. Tryambaka with three phalluses was not devoutly seen at Tripura. Somanātha living at the Śārdūla lake was never seen. Ghuśṛṇeśa living at Revāpura was never seen. Nāganātha, well known in the city of Nāgadanta, was never seen. Great Amṛteśvara residing at Parṇagrāma was never seen. Harihara himself living on the bank of Tuṅgabhadrā was never seen. Śrīnivāsa residing on Veṅkaṭādri was not properly seen. Śrīraṅga residing at Kāverī Karṇikā was not at all seen. Poor and helpless and wailing people were not released from gaol. Beings were not honoured with (i.e. by giving them) food during a famine. On no night a water-fountain was erected at a place without water. A bath was not taken in Godāvarī. Hariṇeśvara was not seen. A bath was not taken in Kṛṣṇaveṇī, when Jupiter was in the Zodiacal sign Libra. Not a piece of land was given. Poets were not at all honoured. A sacrificial session was never performed at the holy places. Sacrifices also were not performed in villages. Water places containing much water were never made on the path. At no place temples of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva were built. Those that were overcome with fear and sought my shelter were never protected. Due to one act of religious merit how such a divine gift was got?"

45-46. Being full of thought like this, Indra, being dejected, hastily went to ask Viṣṇu to the cave in the Milky Ocean. Having entered there that Indra saw Viṣṇu who was asleep. All of a sudden he told him of his being deprived of sovereignty.

Indra said:

47-49. O Viṣṇu, in order to please you I formerly performed a hundred sacrifices. Due to that religious merit I obtained the position of Indra. Now some new person has become Indra in heaven. He has not done religious acts, nor has he performed sacrifices. O Acyuta, how is my throne ascended by him?

Mahādeva said:

50. Having heard the words of him who was speaking like this, Viṣṇu, with his eyes dilating due to smile, spoke sweet words.

The lord said:

51. What is the use of gifts, giving small fruits? What is the use of austerities or sacrifices? Remaining on the earth, he formerly pleased me.

Indra said:

52. O lord, by means of which act, did the brāhmaṇa please you, due to which being pleased you gave him Indra's position?

The lord said:

53-63. He mutters five verses from the eighteenth chapter of the Gītā. Due to that religious merit, the crown gem of all (kinds of) religious merit, he obtained your excellent sovereign empire. Be steady.

Hearing these words of Viṣṇu, Indra, who had (thus) known the means, took the guise of a brāhmaṇa and went to the bank of Godāvarī. There he saw the very auspicious and excellent Kālikāgrāma. There god Kāleśvara, crushing Death, resides. There on the bank of Godāvarī, he saw a very religious, kind brāhmaṇa who had mastered the Vedas, who everyday muttered the eighteenth chapter and whose mind was controlled. Then having rolled at his feet with great joy, he recited the eighteenth chapter taught by him. Then due to that religious merit he secured union with Viṣṇu. And knowing the position of gods like Indra to be small, he abandoned it, and went to Viṣṇu's city. Therefore, only this is a great truth for the sages. I have told you the divine importance of the eighteenth chapter, by just hearing which one is free from all sins. Thus I have told you the importance of the Gītā, which destroys sins, which is meritorious, purifying, which gives (long) life, which leads (one) to heaven, and which is a great means of securing prosperity. O noble one, a man who devoutly listens to it, obtains the fruit of all sacrifices and would obtain absorption into Viṣṇu.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED NINETYTHREE

The Greatness of the Bhāgavata

Pārvatī said:

1-3. O Mahādeva, O god of gods, O omniscient one, O you giving all (kinds of) wealth, showing great compassion for me, tell me what I ask you. I heard the greatness of the Gītā, containing many wonderful tales. Therefore, an eagerness to listen to the great account of Kṛṣṇa has arisen in me. Among all the Purāṇas, Bhāgavata is the best, in what by every word Kṛṣṇa is sung in various ways by the sages. Now tell me its greatness properly and along with the historical accounts.

The lord said:

4. Śaunaka, adept in tasting the sweetness of the nectar of a story, said to the highly intelligent Sūta seated in the Naimiṣa (forest), after having saluted him:

Śaunaka said:

5-10: Narrate (to us) the account of Śrīmad Bhāgavata which is an elixir, which destroys the darkness of ignorance and the sins of a crore of (past) existences, O Sūta. How does discrimination rich with devotion, knowledge and detachment grow? How do Viṣṇu's devotees remove illusion and delusion? Here in this Kali-age a being has almost attained demonhood. What is the elixir to purify him who is overcome with affliction? Now tell (us) that which is the (highest) felicity of (all) felicities, which is the most purifying of (all) purifying objects, and which is the means to please Kṛṣṇa. A preceptor who is pleased gives (to his disciple) the desire-yielding gem, happiness in the world, the wealth of the position of the lord of gods, and also Vaikuṇṭha, which is extremely difficult to obtain.

Sūta said:

11-21. O best brāhmaṇas, I am pleased with you. (Therefore) I shall tell you that as I have heard it which is better than the best, which destroys the fear of the mundane existence, which increases devotion, which is the cause of pleasing Kṛṣṇa. Listen

attentively when I am telling it. In the Kali-age Kṛṣṇa has told the holy text of Śrīmad Bhāgavata, which brings about the protection of the world which is held in the mouth of the tiger of Death. There is nothing superior to this that would purify the mind. It is obtained by good men by means of religious merit earned in many (previous) existences. Knowing the salvation of king Parīkṣit, the lotus-born one compared the holy texts and the great Purāṇas. Among them Śrīmad Bhāgavata came to be greater on the earth. The talk of Bhāgavata is difficult to be had even by gods. Thinking like this many good, pure sages looked upon Śrīmad Bhāgavata as a form of lord (Viṣṇu). By reciting and listening to it a man goes to Viṣṇu's position. Listening to it for a year gives great happiness. O best brāhmaṇa, devotion to it for a month earns splendour. Listening to it for a week gives salvation at all times. O good one, what is the use of talking too much? The good men should everyday drink the nectar of Śrīmad Bhāgavata which records the sports of Kṛṣṇa. Sanaka and others, full of compassion, formerly told it to Nārada who had (already) heard it from Brahmā. The manner of listening to it for a week (was also told).

Śaunaka said:

22-23. Having obtained excellent knowledge called Śrīmad Bhāgavata from his father, Nārada who knows the facts about the worlds, always roams over the earth. Where did Nārada meet those noble ones from whom the divine sage heard the manner of listening to it for a week?

Sūta said:

24-26. About this I shall tell you an account full of devotion, which formerly kind Śukra told me. Once the sages Sanaka and others saw at (the bank of) Viśālā, Nārada with his mind dejected. The sages, given to thinking about the Supreme Spirit and full of amazement, seeing their brother, the divine sage, thinking (like that) asked him.

Kumāras said:

27. O brāhmaṇa, what are you, very much helpless and afflict-

ed, thinking about? This is not proper for you who are associated with bliss. Tell (us) its cause.

Nārada said:

28-42. Knowing the earth to be the best of all the best, having various kinds of holy places, of an auspicious nature due to these auspicious places, I wandered here and there, at these holy places like Puṣkara, Prayāga, Kāśī, the bank of Godāvarī, Harikṣetra, Kurukṣetra, Śrīraṅga, Setubandhana, (but) nowhere did I find happiness, giving delight to my mind. Now the earth is afflicted by Kali, the friend of unrighteousness. On the earth truth, purity, pity, charity exist nowhere. People are selfish, miserable and are false witnesses. They are lethargic, dull-witted, and resort to highly heretical men. Householders attach importance to women; religious students are without (i.e. do not observe) vows. Anchorites are living in cities; those who have renounced the worldly ties are given to enjoyment. Through greed they sell their daughters; they are engaged in agriculture; they have fallen from (good) behaviour; they are hypocrites; they show wanton (behaviour). The hermitages, holy places, rivers, pools are besieged by Yavanas. The temples at other places are destroyed by the wicked. A meditating saint, a siddha or a wise man doing good deeds is not seen. Today fulfilment (of vows) is reduced to ash due to the wild fire in the form of Kali. Communities are everywhere seen to sell food; brāhmaṇas to use an auspicious object as a commodity; and beautiful ladies to use their hair as commodities. Once I reached the auspicious bank of Yamunā. There I saw Vṛndāvana where Viṣṇu had sported. O best sages, listen to the wonder that I saw there. A young lady, with her mind dejected, was seated there. Two old men, breathing and senseless, lay by her side. Weeping before the two, she was nursing and waking them up. I saw her looking into the directions, as it were, looking for her protector. Repeatedly she was fanned and advised by many women. Seeing her from a distance, I approached her through curiosity. Seeing me, the young lady got up and spoke these words:

The young lady said:

43-44a. O good man, stay here for a moment; remove my

anxiety. O good one, the sight of (good) men completely destroys streams of sins. I have had your sight due to my deeds in former existences. Therefore, O you who respect others, please remove my mental agony.

Nārada said:

44b-46. Thus addressed by her, I with my heart affectionate through pity, and full of curiosity, asked the beautiful lady: "O good one, who are you? Who are these two? Who are these lotus-eyed ones? Tell me the entire cause of your grief." Thus asked by me, that young lady, with her mind afflicted, told me her entire agony (and) the cause of the agony.

The young lady said:

47-52. I am known as 'Bhakti' (Devotion). These two are my excellent sons named 'Jñāna' (Knowledge) and 'Vairāgya' (Detachment). They are hurt due to contact with destiny. These rivers like Gaṅgā have come (here) to serve me. O Nārada, by these I am everyday served with respect. I am not getting any felicity; I am emaciated all round, O sage. O best brāhmaṇa, listen to my former account, due to which I became unhappy and am getting happiness nowhere. I was born in the Draviḍa country and brought up in Karṇāṭa. For a little (time) I lived in Mahārāṣṭra, and became old in Gurjara. There due to contact with heretics, I got my limbs cut. For a long time I have become weak, and become dull along with my sons.

53-66a. O Nārada, through luck I have reached this Vṛndāvana: I have, as it were, again become a beautiful young girl. Here these two sons have their minds greatly afflicted. Now I am unable to go leaving them who are very old. How have I become a young girl? Why have my sons become old? Due to what is this difference among us who were of the same condition? The old mother exerts herself when the sons are young. So I, with my mind full of wonder, am worried. O you who know religious practices, O kind one, O protector of the helpless, tell me truly the cause that might be there.

Thus asked by her, I, having thought for a moment, again spoke to Bhakti who was emaciated for a long time: "O sinless

one, through my wisdom I see all your account. Do not be sad, O wise one; Viṣṇu will make you happy. O child, this is Kali age, fearful and destroying all goodness. Due to it good conduct, the path of Yoga and penance are violated. Sinful men, doing dishonest and bad acts, become deities in this (age), and the good are much afflicted with grief, and the bad are delighted at heart. No strong-minded, or wise man is seen. This earth having the burden of the groups of the wicked is not fit to be touched or seen. This is the order every year; everyday auspiciousness is given up. O beautiful lady, no one will either see you or these your sons. Men, full of great attachment, have abandoned you; (therefore) you have become infirm. Due to your contact with Vṛndāvana you have again become young. This Vṛndāvana where Bhakti has become young, is blessed. These two, for want of receivers, have not become young. It appears that they are asleep here due to a little joy to them."

Bhakti said:

66b-81. How did king Parīkṣit install this impure Kali? Why did Viṣṇu, given to kindness, ignore impiety? Remove this doubt of me. I am happy with your words.

O brāhamaṇa, having heard her words, I spoke again. "O girl, if you have asked affectionately, then listen. Since the day Viṣṇu, leaving the earth, went to his own place, Kali, obstructor of the truth, has proceeded. A king saw him in his conquest of the world, and he yielded like a helpless person. The seer of His virtues is not killed. This is common to all. In the Kali age an intelligent man gets that fruit by narrating the account of Viṣṇu, which he does not by means of penance, abstract meditation or concentration. Seeing Kali like this, giving substantial fruit from the unsubstantial, Viṣṇu established this for the good of those born in the Kali age. Due to bad actions, now all excellence has gone away from every place. Objects lie on the ground like husk without seeds. The brāhmaṇas have told the Bhāgavata story in every house out of greed for wealth. Therefore, the excellence has gone. Men doing very cruel deeds, atheists, and hypocrites stay at all holy places. So the excellence has gone. With their minds overtaken by passion, anger, great greed, desire they

commence (religious) acts. Therefore, the excellence of the acts has gone. The fruit of abstract meditation has gone because of non-restraint of mind, greed, hypocrisy, resorting to heretics, want of the study of holy texts. The wise dally with their wives like he-buffaloes. They are expert in producing sons and not in accomplishing salvation. Devotion to Viṣṇu is (found) nowhere. All are led by tradition. All are given to censuring gods; all are fond of condemning the good. This is the practice of the age. Who should be blamed? Therefore, remembering the lotus-eyed (Viṣṇu) you will get happiness." Hearing these words uttered by me, she was amazed. O best brāhmaṇas, having praised me, she spoke again:

Bhakti said:

82-84. O divine sage, you are blessed. Due to my (good) luck you have come (here). The sight of the good gives all prosperity in the world. Now advise me in such a way that I will have a means for my happiness. O brāhmaṇa, in this world there is nothing to be accomplished by you. I salute Brahmā's son, having heard whose one sentence (Prahlāda) the son of Kayādhū (wife of Hiraṇyakaśipu) subdued the Māyā of (Viṣṇu) the unborn one, and due to whose grace Dhruva attained to an undecaying eternal position.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED NINETYFOUR

Śrīmad Bhāgavata, the Destroyer of All Miseries

Sūta said:

1. O kind sages, listen to what was told by Nārada when he was thus requested by that extremely helpless Bhakti.

Nārada said:

2-10. O girl, do not be sad in vain. Having placed your mind in your heart, remember Śrīkṛṣṇa's lotus-like feet. (By that) you will obtain happiness. That Kṛṣṇa who protected Draupadī from

ignominy from the Kauravas, who looked after the beautiful cowherdesses, has not gone anywhere (else). O Bhakti, you are dear to him, (cared for) even more than his own life. Called by you, the lord will come to even mean houses. In the three ages like Satya knowledge and detachment accomplished salvation. In the Kali age Bhakti (devotion) alone brings about absorption into Brahman. Deciding like this he, of the nature of consciousness, of the form of highest bliss and consciousness, delighted in mind, produced you from his own body. With your palms joined you then asked Hari: "What do I do (now)?" Kṛṣṇa then ordered you: "Nourish my devotees." You accepted to do so. Hari was then pleased. He gave you Salvation as your maid, and Knowledge and Detachment as your sons. Remaining in Vaikuṇṭha you always nourished your devotees. To nourish your devotees you resorted to the form of your shadow (i.e. semblance). Salvation, Knowledge and Detachment came here (i.e. to the earth) with you. From the Kṛta (age) to the Dvāpara age, Mukti (salvation) stayed (here).

11-22a. But in the Kali age, she became emaciated, and suffered from the disease due to the heretics. By your order she again went (back) to Vaikuṇṭha. On merely being remembered by you, she quickly comes (to this world). Looking upon these two as your sons, you have protected them by your side. Due to being ignored in the Kali age both these your sons have become dull and old. Yet you give up anxiety. I shall think of a means. O you beautiful lady, there is no (other) age like the Kali age. In it I shall make you known in every house. If by obscuring other practices and putting forward great festivals, I shall not (be able to) promote you, then I am not Hari's servant. Those living beings, even though sinful, who are endowed with you in the Kali age, will, being fearless, go to Hari's abode. Those of pure forms, who are devoted to you, always of the form of love, will not see Yama even in a dream. An evil spirit, a goblin, a demon or an asura is not capable of touching or seeing those whose minds are full of devotion. Hari is not obtained by means of austerities, Vedas, knowledge or (religious) acts. He is obtained by devotion (only). The proof thereof are the cowherdesses. Men of righteous act might have devotion after a thousand existences. In the Kali age devotion alone (excels). By means of

devotion Kṛṣṇa stands before (the devotee). Those who offend Bhakti, perish in the three worlds. Formerly Durvāsas who condemned Bhakti, suffered misery. Enough of virtuous conduct; enough of (visiting) holy places; enough of abstract meditations; enough of sacrifices; enough of narrations of wise tales; Bhakti alone always gives salvation.

22b-30. Thus addressed by me, and having heard her own greatness, she, with her entire body full of joy, again said these words (to me): "O Nārada, you are blessed. You have a steady affection for me. I shall never let go your attention to me. O good one, by you, kind (to me), my suffering is destroyed in a moment. My two sons do not have understanding. Rouse these two." Hearing those words of her, I, having pity, touching (them) with my hand, proceeded to rouse (them). Bringing my mouth near their ears, I loudly uttered the words: "Jñāna, rise quickly. O Vairāgya, awake." Though repeatedly being roused by the sounds of the Vedas, by the recitals of the Gītā, they did not somehow get roused. Not seeing (anything) with their eyes, and languidly yawning, both were grey-haired like cranes, and had their bodies mostly dry like wood. The two, emaciated with hunger, having observed (me), again went to sleep. Then I was full of thought: 'What should I do (now)? Oh, how will their sleep go (away)? Their old age is severe.'

31-42. O best brāhmaṇas, thinking like this, I constantly remembered Govinda. Just then there was heard a divine voice: "O sage, do not be dejected. Your exertion will be fruitful. There is no doubt. For this purpose, O divine sage, do a good deed. Good men, ornaments of the virtuous, will tell you that good deed. When that good deed is done, the sleep and the old age of these two will disappear in a moment. Bhakti (devotion) will spread everywhere." O brāhmaṇas, even after having distinctly heard this divine voice, I could not make out as to what was told by the voice in a secretive manner. What is that deed due to which the two would be endowed with understanding? Where would be the good ones? How will they tell that good deed to me? Now what should I do (about) what the divine voice told me? Then, O brāhmaṇas, having placed them there, I went out of Vṛndāraṇya, and asked the best brāhmaṇas here and there.

Having heard the entire account and with their minds amazed, they, not understanding the divine voice, did not give a reply. Some said: "It cannot be comprehended". Others said: "It cannot be understood." Others, thinking again and again, kept mum. The triad, though being roused with the sounds of the Vedas, and Vedāntas, and also by repeated recitations of the Gītā, did not rise. 'Oh, (how cruel) is fate! How can other human beings do that which the meditating saint Nārada himself could not understand?' Then being thoughtful I came to Badarivana. I determined to practise penance for that purpose. Just then I saw the best sages, Sanaka and others, bright like a crore of suns. I spoke to those best sages:

43-48. "I saw you due to great luck. Therefore, O noble ones, with your minds pleased, you may (please) tell me the means. You are the greatest among the meditating saints. You are intelligent. You are very learned; you, Kumāras, five years old, are the ancestors of the ancient people. You always live in Vaikuṇṭha; you are always engaged in narrating (the glory of) Viṣṇu. You are intoxicated by the account—the nectar—of (Viṣṇu's) sports. You are devoted to remembering Viṣṇu. Therefore, (old age,) the Daughter of Time does not trouble you. Due just to the knitting of your eye-brows, formerly the two door-keepers of Viṣṇu became demons for three existences, and again came back to their places. (Please) tell the means which is told by the heavenly voice. O kind ones, (please) tell me what should be done and in what way in this matter. The wise ones should well tell (me) how Bhakti, Jñāna and Vairāgya would secure happiness, and how they would attain fame in all the worlds".

Kumāras said:

49-57. O divine sage, do not be anxious. Have delight in your mind. There is a means in this matter, which can be easily had, and which gives happiness to the world. O Nārada, you are blessed. You are the crest-jewel of the detached ones. You are the foremost among those who are fit for Śrīkṛṣṇa's love. You are the best among speakers. O divine sage, it is no wonder for you, engrossed in the means of devotion, to spread devotion properly on the earth. For (securing) divine faculties the sages have designed various means. They could be secured with exertion; and

all of them mostly give heaven as their fruit. The path leading to Vaikuṇṭha is hidden in the worlds. A good man, teaching it, is generally not found. O best sage, that good act which the divine voice indicated to you, is known by the ancients to be jñānayajña (knowledge-sacrifice). We feel that the talk (i.e. the recitation) of Śrīmad Bhāgavata is a knowledge-sacrifice, told by Śuka, and would give happiness to Bhakti, Jñāna and Virāga. All these sins of Kali, afraid of the sound of Śrīmad Bhāgavata, run away like wolves at the roar of lion. Bhakti, along with Jñāna and Vairāgya, producing the feeling of joy in each house, in each person, will sport happily.

Sūta said:

58. Having heard Kumāras' words, revered Nārada, with his mind delighted, looking to their prosperity, spoke again.

Nārada said:

59-62. The triad, covered by Kali's noxious qualities, is not rising (though) roused by sounds of Vedas and Vedāṅgas, and recitations of the Gītā. How (then) will it rise now by the recitation of Bhāgavata? You, whose sight is fruitful should (please) remove this doubt. O you who are affectionate to those who seek your shelter, (please) do not tarry in this matter.

Then Sanaka and others, detached and living in perpetual celibacy, the ancient brāhmaṇas, who had supernatural faculties, respectfully said to Nārada:

Kumāras said:

63-71. The Bhāgavata-account has risen from the quintessence of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. Therefore, it appears to be the best, and the rise of fruit is different. As the taste is present in a mango fruit from the bottom to the top, but is different when separated and drunk, and delights all, as ghee present in milk is not thought to be pleasant, but when separated is divine, and increases the joy of gods, as sugar remains pervading the bottom, the middle and the end (i.e. the top) of a sugarcane, and is sweet when separated, so is Bhāgavata-story. The Purāṇa

named Śrīmad Bhāgavata is relish itself; it is manifested for the happiness of Bhakti, Jñāna and Vairāgya to Brahmā, remaining in the lotus born from his navel, by Kṛṣṇa. The four-versed (summary) of it appears to be the entire Brahman. That account was narrated to you by Brahmā. You also narrated it to Vyāsadeva, to destroy torment. By remembering it Bādarāyaṇa (Vyāsa) instantly became depressed; and in a manner delighting the soul, composed (the work of) the great name. Due to what are you amazed, that you are asking again and again? The holy text of Śrīmad Bhāgavata is capable of attracting Kṛṣṇa.

Sūta said:

72. Having heard these desired words spoken by the foremost ones like Sanaka, the best meditating saints, Nārada devoutly seized their feet, and saluting them by bowing his head, said to them who destroy the misery of the world.

Nārada said:

73-74. Your sight destroys the stream of sins. It gives bliss to those who are afflicted by the wild fire in the form of the misery of the mundane existence, by drinking it when fully sung by Śeṣa's mouth. I have sought your shelter for the manifestation of love. If due to the rise of religious merit earned in many existences a lucky person gets the company of the good, his great darkness of delusion caused by ignorance would perish, and great discrimination springs (in him).

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED NINETYFIVE

The Rule of Reciting and Listening to the Bhāgavata for a Week

Sūta said:

1. Then the divine sage, having asked for leave of the Kumāras, and bending down, showing respect for knowledge-sacrifice, said:

Nārada said:

2-4. With care I shall perform knowledge-sacrifice, highlighted by the narrative of the holy Śuka-text for establishing Bhakti, Jñāna and Virāga. O brāhmaṇas, tell me the place where I should perform the sacrifice. I have chosen you four only as the conductors of the sacrifice. O you proficient in knowledge-sacrifice, for how many days should the Bhāgavata-story be heard? What rite should be performed at that time?

Kumāras said:

5-12. O Nārada, listen. We shall tell you the place, being heard at which the story would destroy the heaps of sins of men, and increase their religious merit. Near Gaṅgādvāra there is a great city called Kāmada. To the north of the divine river there is a bank called Ānanda. It is resorted to by many hosts of sages and deities and siddhas. It is full of many trees and creepers, clean, soft sand. It is charming, is in a lonely region, and is adorned with golden lotuses. In the minds of the beings living near it and having in their minds love for one another, there was no enmity due to the power of this place only. You should carefully perform there knowledge-sacrifice. The story (of Bhāgavata) recited there will give unprecedented delight. Bhakti will come there followed by her two sons remaining on the street of Vṛndāvana and with their bodies worn out due to old age. Bhakti with her sons will become a young lady after drinking the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's glory at the place where there will be recitation of Bhāgavata.

Sūta said:

13-20. Having spoken like this, the Kumāras, along with Nārada, went quickly to Gaṅgādvāra for (performing) the knowledge-sacrifice. O best among Bhārgavas, when they reached the bank of Gaṅgā, there was a great din in the seven worlds like Bhū. The residents of the seven worlds, desirous of (enjoying) the flavour of Bhāgavata came there running, so also the devotees of Viṣṇu like Bhṛgu, Vasiṣṭha, Cyavana, Gautama, Medhātithi, Devala, Devarāta, Rāma, Viśvāmitra, Śākala, sons of Mṛkaṇḍa, of Atri, and Pippalāda, masters of abstract meditation, Vyāsa, Parāśara, Śuka and others, the chief among the followers of

Viṣṇu, who were accompanied by their disciples, who knew many holy texts, who were chief among those relishing Kṛṣṇa's account. The Upaniṣads, the Vedas, the hymns, the religious treatises teaching magical formulas for the worship of the deities, the digests, the ten and seven Purāṇas, the six Śāstras (philosophical treatises) also came there. So also rivers like Gaṅgā, lakes like Puṣkara, all holy places, all quarters, forests like Daṇḍaka, mountains like Himālaya, gods, gandharvas, kinnaras, islands, seas, regents of quarters, and residents of the nether world came there.

21-25. Nārada gave an excellent seat at the time of the initiation. All the Kumāras, highly devoted to Kṛṣṇa, who were saluted, sat (there). Devotees of Viṣṇu, those who were very much detached and had renounced the world, celibates, were the chief; they remained at the fore; and Nārada sat before them. On his left were the hosts of sages, on his right were the residents of heaven. O descendant of Bhṛgu, Vedas, Upaniṣads, so also the Holy Places were (seated) elsewhere. Echoing in the ten quarters the shouts of victory, words of salutation and the sound of conches touched the sky. The residents of heaven, being pleased, got into aeroplanes and showered flowers of desire-yielding trees over the assembly.

Sūta said:

26. When those Bhṛgu and others were seated as they deserved, they narrated the importance of Bhāgavata to Nārada.

Kumāras said:

27-48. O Nārada, listen. We shall, according to the rule, tell you the wonderful greatness of the holy text called Śrīmad Bhāgavata. Righteous people should always resort (i.e. listen) to the Bhāgavata-story, by hearing which they become contented. The treatise called Śrīmad Bhāgavata comprises eighteen thousand verses and twelve skandhas(sections), and is (in the form of) a dialogue between Parīkṣit and Śuka. As long as the text of (i.e. narrated by) Śuka does not reach the ears of a man, he, being deluded by ignorance, moves in the circle of the mundane existence. If men purified by devotion have not listened to Bhāgavata, what is the use of their having listened to many holy texts,

Purāṇas, digests and scriptures? The houses of those men, in which the Bhāgavata-story is always (narrated), are of the nature of holy places and destroy sins. Thousands of horse-sacrifices and hundreds of Rājasūya sacrifices are not worth even a sixteenth part of the Bhāgavata-story. O best sage, sins remain in this body as long as Bhāgavata is not properly listened to by a man. In the meritorious fruit, Gaṅgā, Gayā, Kāśī, or Puṣkara is not equal to the Bhāgavata-story. If you desire the destruction of the mundane existence, then recite everyday with your own mouth a half or a quarter verse from Bhāgavata. Bhāgavata is the origin of the Vedas, the mother of the Vedas, so also of the Puruṣa-sūkta. The triad of the Vedas is Bhāgavata; so also the two formulas—twelve-syllabled and eight-syllabled. The Sun, Prayāga, Time of the form of years, brāhmaṇas maintaining sacred fire, (the desire-yielding cow) Surabhi, the twelfth day (of a month), Tulasī, spring season, Puruṣottama (i.e. Viṣṇu)—among these, O best sage, there is actually no difference. O Nārada, the sin of that brāhmaṇa, committed during crores of existences, who would everyday expound Bhāgavata, perishes. To men, the listening to, reciting or thinking about Bhāgavata and waiting upon Tulasī and fire, give salvation and devotion. He who, being full of devotion, free from pride, eating limited (food), with his senses restrained, gives Śrīmad Bhāgavata along with a golden throne on the full-moon day of Bhādrapada to the best brāhmaṇa and listens to it from the beginning would obtain the world where absorption into Kṛṣṇa is had. He who, when his time of death has approached, abandoning fear far away, would devoutly listen to Bhāgavata, obtains salvation. He, the wicked one, who, right from his birth, has not, after properly controlling his mind, drunk (i.e. listened to) the account of Kṛṣṇa, has in vain led his life like a cāṇḍāla or a beast on the earth, and has very much tormented his mother. The life of those men who have not listened to Bhāgavata, have not worshipped the Ancient Man (Viṣṇu), have not offered oblations into the mouths of brāhmaṇas has become fruitless. The sages, the ancient siddhas, say: "Fie upon that man resembling a beast, a burden on the earth, whose mind, wicked due to the contact with the bad, does not take delight in the story of Bhāgavata." The story of Bhāgavata is

quite difficult to be had (i.e. heard) on the earth. It is had by means of the religious merit due to crores of existences.

49-56. Therefore, O treasure of abstract meditation, O good man, the story of Viṣṇu should be heard everyday. O brāhmaṇa, there is really no rule about it (i.e. about listening to it). Since listening to it is believed to be done with truthfulness and celibacy, therefore, in the Kali age there is a special rule about it of the nature of (its being listened to for) seven days. The listening to it is prescribed for seven days on account of the lack of the control of a man's mind, a disease, or shortening of his life, and due to many blemishes of Kali. It is possible to control the mind and follow a prescribed course for seven days (only). Therefore, this rule is formed. That fruit which is had by devoutly listening (to it) everyday from the beginning to the end for seven days is laid down by Śuka. That fruit which is not had by means of penance, abstract meditation or concentration, is easily had by listening to it for seven days. The rule of (reciting or listening to) Bhāgavata for seven days is said to be better than performing a sacrifice, observing a vow, practising penance and meditation, acquiring knowledge and visiting a holy place. When Kṛṣṇa was ready to go to his own place after having left the earth, intelligent Uddhava, knowing it, said (these) words to Govinda:

Uddhava said:

57-63. O revered one, after having accomplished the entire mission of the gods, you now desire to go to your own place, beyond darkness. Therefore, O lord, worry due to fear of separation from you has arisen in me. O lord of gods, remove it. I have sought your refuge. This terrible Kali age has come. In it all people will be wicked. Therefore, O lord, tell (me) what should be done. Whose shelter will this earth, full of burden, seek? O Yadunandana, no other protector like you is seen here. Therefore, O treasure of compassion, showing pity on us, stay here only. O lord, you have manifested (yourself) only for the protection of the good. Even though you are qualityless, formless, and only of the form of the good, consciousness and bliss, your devotees will not remain on the earth in separation from you. There is difficulty in worshipping the qualityless. Therefore, do what is good for us.

Sūta said:

64-68. Having heard these words of Uddhava, Viṣṇu thought for a moment and being full of great compassion, gave him Bhāgavata, after having deposited his own lustre into it, O brāhmaṇa. Having given it to Uddhava, the lord entered his own place. Due to that this image of Viṣṇu in the form of words is here (in the world). By constantly resorting to it the sin of men would perish in a moment. Therefore, listening to it for seven days is said to be the best. O brāhmaṇa, its listeners, speaker or questioner become one with him. Bhāgavata is capable of removing misery, poverty, ill luck and sins, of overcoming passion and anger in the Kali age. Otherwise, how can, Viṣṇu's Māyā, difficult to be overcome even by gods, turn away from men without (the help of) Bhāgavata?

Sūta said:

69-73. Having thus told the greatness of Bhāgavata, they commenced narrating the divine story of Bhāgavata. When (the narration of) Bhāgavata, the essence of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, was commenced by the brāhmaṇas, Bhakti in a moment manifested herself there only. She was full of love, of a charming body, and had held her two sons, full of joy, by her hands; and was uttering the names (like) Śrīkṛṣṇa, Govinda, Hari, Murāri, Nātha (lord). The members of the assembly saw her, the ornament of Bhāgavata and of a very fine dress; and with wonder in their eyes all of them thought: 'How (has she come)? Wherefrom (has she come)? Who is she?' Then the blessed Kumāras said: "Now she has come out from the contents of the story." Having heard words like this, she, along with her sons, politely said to the sons of Brahmā:

Bhakti said:

74. Though perished in the Kali age, you have today nourished me with the elegance of the (Bhāgavata) story. Where shall I sit with these two? Show me a favourite seat.

Sūta said:

75. Having heard these words, Brahmā's sons having thought and properly reflected in their minds, spoke to Bhakti, who

removes the disease in the form of the mundane existence, who gives love alone to those who have devotion for Viṣṇu.

Kumāras said:

76-78. When there are good devotees, having controlled their mind from going astray and having concentrated it on the lotus-like feet of Viṣṇu, after being devoted to Viṣṇu, these blemishes due to Kali, though powerful in the world, will not be able to see you. Led by Nārada, you alone will bring about the welfare of the world. In the entire world, those poor people in whose heart remains devotion to Viṣṇu alone, are, extremely blessed. Even Viṣṇu, tied by the bond of love, leaves his own world quickly and enters their heart.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED NINETYSIX

Dhundhulī's Story

Sūta said:

1-7. Seeing extra-ordinary devotion in the minds of Viṣṇu's devotees, Viṣṇu left his world, and went to the earth. He was having a garland of wood flowers; was dark like a cloud; had put on yellow garments; was wearing a crown; his group of girdles was dishevelled; his ear-rings in the shape of crocodiles were shining. He was charming due to three folds; was adorned with the beautiful Kaustubha; he was handsome like a crore of Cupids; he was besmeared with (the yellow sandal called) haricandana. He was the image of great joy and consciousness; he was sweet; and had held a flute. He entered the pure hearts of his devotees. Those followers of Viṣṇu, who lived in Vaikuṇṭha and were of tranquil minds, and of concealed forms, came to listen to Viṣṇu's tale. Then there was a shout of victory mixed with the sound of conches, due to which (everything) inauspicious, very fierce due to Kali, perished. Seeing that the people there had forgotten their houses and themselves, Nārada knowing the truth about the Supreme Soul said to the Kumāras:

Nārada said:

8-11a. O best sages, this greatness due to the seven days' (reading of or listening to the Bhāgavata) which I saw is uncommon. Even the fools, the wicked, so also the beasts and birds do reach the position known to be the highest. No other holy text so pure is laid down for the purification of the heart in the world of men. O Kumāras, in the Kali age, the abode of blemishes, it destroys the stream of sins, and brings about blessedness. (Please) tell me who are not purified by the devotional act (of reading of or listening to the Bhāgavata) for seven days, full of the stories (from it). You, the kind ones, have shown a new path for the good of the people.

Kumāras said:

11b-15. Those men who are sinners, very wicked, engaged in doing bad acts, are jealous, burnt by fire in the form of anger, crooked, passionate, go to Viṣṇu by means of the devotional act for seven days. Those who are without truth (i.e. are not truthful), who censure their father and mother, who are full of thirst (i.e. desire), who are out (of the fold) of the (four) stages of human life and castes, who are hypocrites, who are hurtful, go to Viṣṇu by means of the devotional act (of reading or listening to the Bhāgavata) for seven days. Those, who have committed the five terrible sins, who are deceitful, cruel, who are pityless like goblins, who have fed themselves with others' wealth, who are adulterous, go to Viṣṇu by means of the devotional act extending over seven days. Those wicked ones who violently always commit sins with their body, words or mind, who are mean, ungrateful, impure, wicked-hearted, go to Viṣṇu by means of the devotional act extending over seven days.

Sūta said:

16. Then, when Nārada, honoured by gods, was thus pleased in heart, the Kumāras who were pleased, again said to Nārada:

Kumāras said:

17-31. About this I shall tell you an old historical account, by merely hearing which, destruction of sins takes place. Formerly

in the city called Kohala, full of the practices (proper) for the castes and the stages of human life, and of wealth and grains, (situated) on the bank of Tuṅgabhadrā, there was the best brāhmaṇa known as Ātmadeva, who was proficient in Vedic learning and rites, and engaged in daily duties. His dear wife was Dhundhulī by name. She was always engaged in her own welfare. She regulated (everything) with her words; she was beautiful, and was born in good family. Generally she talked much as a result of her former acts. She was valiant in domestic duties, cruel, and was quarrelsome. When the couple, having no child, was staying there, they crossed the age of the measure of fifty years. They, being childless, lived unhappily in their house. For the birth of a child they gave wealth etc. (to brāhmaṇas). So also they gave many cows, (pieces of) land, (coins of) gold and garments. (But) due to (the effect of) their former deeds, neither a son nor a daughter was born (to them). And once that best brāhmaṇa Ātmadeva, dejected and unhappy due to not having a child, left his house and went to a forest. With his mind overcome by grief, he, emaciated by hunger, and encompassed by thirst, wandering here and there, luckily reached a lake. That best brāhmaṇa, having drunk water in (i.e. from) that lake, sat after resorting to the shade of a tree, O Nārada. By chance, just then, a siddha, roaming over the earth, came (there); he too, drinking the water in (i.e. from) the lake, came there only. Having seen that tranquil anchorite, the noble-minded Ātmadeva honoured him and touched his feet as of his own preceptor. The two who were seated (there), being of very affectionate minds, asked questions to each other like a preceptor and his disciple in a hermitage. That anchorite, the ocean of pity, seeing him of an afflicted heart and sighing, asked that Ātmadeva, seated before him:

The siddha said:

32-33. O best brāhmaṇa, what great worry is there in your heart causing grief? O you who know religious practices, tell me that, tormenting you.

Hearing those words of that very noble siddha, Ātmadeva then told him the cause of his grief.

Ātmadeva said:

34-37. O sage, what should I tell you about the grief accumulated due to former deeds? My ancestors are drinking tepid water. My ancestors, so also deities, are not at all accepting the offerings made by me. Dejected due to that grief, I have come here to cast my life. Fie upon my life, my house without progeny, my wealth and family! Even the cow protected by me becomes barren. Even the tree planted by me becomes barren. What is the use of the life of me who am luckless and childless?

Kumāras said:

38-39. Speaking like this when he, oppressed by grief, wept loudly before him, great compassion arose in the heart of the sage. The wise one seeing the line of letters on his forehead and understanding it, spoke again in detail to the brāhmaṇa Ātmadeva:

The siddha said:

40-42. O brāhmaṇa, listen. Today I have read your fate. Your having a son is not seen till the seventh existence. Give up your persistence for a child. The course of fate is most powerful. Taking to right knowledge, be happy, O very intelligent one.

Hearing these words of the siddha, the best brāhmaṇa, with his heart fixed on having a child, and being very unhappy spoke to the siddha:

The brāhmaṇa said:

43-50. What would happen with right knowledge? Give me a son even by force. Otherwise, I, filled with grief, will cast my life before you.

Seeing this persistence of the brāhmaṇa, the ascetic said: "Sagara, king of Aṅga, obtained misery. Citraketu became miserable due to wiping out the writing of fate. Therefore, O you who know religious practices, you will not be happy with a son, for fate is very powerful." Saying so, that siddha, honoured by the good, gave a fruit to the best brāhmaṇa, who persisted for a son. "O brāhmaṇa, I have given this fruit to you for obtaining a

son. Give it to your wife. By that a son will undoubtedly be born to you. The wife should, for a year, resort to truthfulness, purity, kindness, charity, eating once a day only. The son would be pure due to that." Speaking like this the meditating saint left, (and) the brāhmaṇa came home. Having given the fruit to his wife, he told her what the siddha had said. Then that cruel Dhundhulī was always eager to have her say.

51-59. She told her friend all that the siddha had said: "If I would eat the fruit given by the siddha, then I would be pregnant. How shall I be able to bear it? I shall have little food, and will not have strength to move or for domestic work. If the foetus would be slanting, then it would be my death. How can I, so delicate, bear the pangs of delivery? When I shall be dull my sister-in-law would take away all my possessions. I am worried. O you of bright smile, what do (i.e. should) I do?" She, O brāhmaṇa, for fear of breaking the friendship, with her face smiling affectionately said: "It is just so." Due to this wrong reasoning she did not eat the fruit at all. When her husband asked her: "Have you eaten the fruit?", she told him, "I have eaten it." Once her sister came to her house of her own accord. She told all that to her (saying): "This is my great anxiety. By being pregnant what shall I do? Tell me what is proper." She said: "I am carrying. After delivery I shall give my foetus (i.e. child) to you. Till that time live happily in your house, as if you are pregnant, concealing (the fact). I shall always nourish the child in your house only. O you of an auspicious face, today give the fruit to the cow to test (the siddha's words)."

60-69. Speaking like this, she went home with a pleased mind. Dhundhulī also did as her sister had told her. She, after having delivered a child, quickly gave it to Dhundhulī. She too told her husband: "The son is comfortably born." Due to a child born to Ātmadeva, people became happy. He gave gifts to best brāhmaṇas, and performed the ceremony at the birth of the child. In his house there was the auspicious sound of songs and musical instruments. Ātmadeva, the very intelligent one, was joyful. Then she said to her husband: "There is no milk in my breasts. How shall I now nourish the child born recently, O lord? My sister also has delivered; but soon her child died. Bring her and keep her in (our) house. She will nourish the child." Hearing the

words of that Dhundhulī, the confused Ātmadeva, the best brāhmaṇa, full of joy, did just like that. The mother significantly named him Dhundhukārī. The boy obtained nourishment from the milk of his mother's sister. After three months had passed, the cow gave birth to a child. He was handsome in all limbs, was divine, spotless and had lustre like gold. Having seen him, the brāhmaṇa was pleased, and himself performed the sacraments. All people that had come with a desire to see him were very much amazed.

70-78a. (They said:) "Due to the rise of great good luck of the brāhmaṇa Ātmadeva a boy, of a divine form, is born of the cow. It is a great wonder." Due to destiny nobody knew the secret. Seeing the boy to have ears like those of a cow, he called him Gokarṇa only. After some time both of them attained youth. Gokarṇa was learned and wise. Dhundhukārin was very wicked. He was without a bath or purity or rites, ate prohibited food, and was full of anger. He was a thief, hated all people, and kept the company of wicked cāṇḍālas. He forcibly seized the children that were playing and threw them into a well. In the same way, being addicted to prostitutes, he diminished (i.e. squandered) his father's money. Like a helpless person, his poor father wept. "A childless person is happy. A bad son causes grief. Now I have experienced that the siddha's words are true. Where should I go? Where should I stay? Who would remove my misery? I shall cast my life in water or fire; or I would fall from a precipice." To him, his father who was thinking like this and whose face was hung down, the wise Gokarṇa came and properly advised him.

Gokarṇa said:

78b-84. O father, the mundane existence is worthless; it causes misery and delusion to men. O father, who is a son? What is wealth? Who is whose wife? Who iṣ the husband? The helpless world, tied by delusion, suffers, and not due to any other cause. Indra does not have any happiness; a sovereign emperor has no happiness. O father, only a detached sage, given to seclusion, has happiness. Give up your ignorance, the delusion of the form of progeny, the cause of hell. Being free from the couples (of opposite qualities) and from pride, and giving up everything, go to a forest.

Hearing these words of him, the brāhmaṇa said to Gokarṇa:

The brāhmaṇa said:

O good one, tell me in detail what should be done in the forest. O you treasure of pity, emancipate me who am tied down by the chains of delusion, who am wicked and of a mean mind, and who am fallen in the ditch of the worldly existence.

Hearing these words of his father Gokarṇa, learned due to knowledge and with his mind pleased, spoke to his helpless, dejected father:

Gokarṇa said:

85-86. Quickly give up the feeling of mineness for this (your) body which is a collection of flesh and bones, and for (your) wife, sons etc. Note that this world is momentary. Be a wise man, taking interest in detachment, and be firm in devotion. Always resort to religious practices. Give up the practices of (common) people. Serve good men. Give up desire for pleasures. Quickly give up thinking about the faults and virtues of others, and drink deep the juice of the stories of Viṣṇu.

Kumāras said:

87. Having thus known the experience told by his son, he who was of a firm mind and free from desire, and who had crossed sixty years, abandoned his house; and the magnanimous one, always followed by people dear to Viṣṇu, and living in a forest, obtained Viṣṇu's position.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED NINETYSEVEN

The Seven-day Bhāgavata Recitation

Kumāras said:

1-10a. O Nārada, when the father had thus gone to the forest, the very wicked Dhundhukārin came and threatened his mother. O Nārada, (he said) to his mother: "Tell me where the wealth is. If you do not tell me about the grains, by all means I shall kill you. She, frightened by his words, and with her mind afflicted, fell at night in a well and died. After knowing it people took her out. Gokarṇa took out the dead body with the help of brāhmaṇas, her relatives. O sage, the wise one, to whom pleasure and pain were alike, went on a pilgrimage. Dhundhukārin lived in his house, and was surrounded by harlots. Due to his practice of very fierce deeds, he did not know how to feed them. The harlots, desiring ornaments, said to him: "O dear one, all of us have been associated with you, our protector, and have stayed (with you). O you who respect others, here there is no other giver of wealth. Therefore, give us fine garments and bright ornaments. Otherwise, we shall go to another man from (i.e. leaving) you." Hearing these words of them, he thought for a moment, and then he, blind due to desire for sensual enjoyment, and not being aware of death, went out of his house at night, stole from someone's house garments and ornaments, and O Nārada, he, full of joy, gave those to them to please them.

10b-22. Seeing those priceless garments and ornaments, the women thought: 'He has brought these by stealing them'. Deciding like this, they consulted one another. Everyday he commits thefts. The king will arrest him. Having snatched his wealth, he will certainly beat him. Then, why should we not secretly kill him committing thefts, and collecting much wealth go to another place? (Deliberating) like this, those wicked ones were intent on killing him, when asleep, binding him at the neck with very strong cords. When he did not die even after his neck was pressed, they threw many burning charcoals on his face. Being oppressed by the great affliction due to the flames of fire, he died. The almost rash women threw his body in a ditch. O best sage, nobody knew his whereabouts. When asked by people,

they said, "Our lord has gone away. After getting wealth he will come (back) after a long time." Therefore, the best learned men should not trust women. They always hurt the one that trusts them, and go to newer and newer (men). Their words are full of nectar, increasing the interest of the passionate; (but) their heart is like the edge of a razor. Who indeed is dear to women? Then those prostitutes, taking the large wealth, much perturbed by the fear of the king, quickly went to another village. Dhundhukārin, doing bad deeds, became a big evil spirit. Taking up the form of a storm, he everyday ran (away) into the directions away from wicked death. He was troubled by cold and heat, was without food, and thirsty.

23-29. Repeatedly crying loudly "Ha! ha!" he did not get happiness anywhere. Knowing, after some time, that he was dead, Gokarṇa performed a śrāddha at Gayā during his pilgrimage. After completing his pilgrimage, he came (back) to his village. The villagers, his kinsmen and relatives honoured him. The brāhmaṇa stayed at home for a few days. Knowing that Gokarṇa was asleep in the yard of his house at night, wicked Dhundhukārin showed him his fierce form. For a moment he became an elephant; in a moment he became a camel; in a moment he became a buffalo; in a moment he became fire; in a moment he became a serpent; and a man in a moment. Seeing this inauspiciousness, the intelligent Gokarṇa, very much amazed, mustered courage and thought: 'What is this? This is some mean man, reduced to a miserable condition.' Deciding like this to his mind, he, full of pity, said:

Gokarṇa said:

30-36. Who are you so fierce, that have come at night to frighten me? Are you an evil spirit or a goblin? Due to what are you reduced to this condition? O glorious one, tell me what I should do for you now, since you, of a fierce form, have approached me at night.

Hearing these words of his brother, that very wicked Dhundhukārin who was reduced to the condition of an evil spirit, and who was very much afflicted, wept. Confused by his condition of an evil spirit, he was not able to speak with

words. Being thirsty, he indicated with signs (that he wanted) to drink water. Then that highly virtuous Gokarṇa, esteemed by the good, took water in the hollow of his hands, and raising it, threw it (on him). That water thrown by the noble Gokarṇa, his brother, came to satisfy the evil spirit, Dhundhukārin. Then having obtained consciousness due to the water given by his virtuous brother, Gokarṇa, he spoke, O Nārada:

The evil spirit said:

37-47a. I am your brother named Dhundhukārin. Due to the fault of my deeds, I have been reduced to the condition of an evil spirit. My mother, terrified by me in many ways, died through grief. Then eager to feed the prostitutes, I, for getting money, committed prohibited acts like stealing, through greed of money. Once they asked me for excellent ornaments. Stealing them from a rich man's house at night, I brought them. Then through greed of wealth, O you who give respect (to others), they forcibly tied me at the neck, and killed me by throwing fire on me. Taking that abundant wealth, all of them, having given up the goodness of heart, ran away from this town through the fear of the king. I was reduced to the condition of an evil spirit. O brother, today being sprinkled by you, the kind one, with water due to (my) religious merit, I regained consciousness. I live on air. Due to my luck, the desired thing has come up. I saw you, my brother, asleep in the yard of your house. Then I suddenly exerted to attack you who did not know me. O good one, now I have been recognised by you. O my brother, O brother of the helpless, O ocean of pity, quickly free me from this condition of an evil spirit. There is no doubt that you are blessed.

Hearing these words of his brother, the wise, very intelligent Gokarṇa, with his mind dejected, spoke to his brother Dhundhukārin, who was afflicted:

Gokarṇa said:

47b-51. Hearing from the people's mouths that you were dead, I offered you a piṇḍa at Gayā. How have you been reduced to the condition of an evil spirit, O brother? Even one reduced to a miserable condition secures an auspicious course by means

of a piṇḍa offered to him at Gayā. There is no doubt about this. How is it that you did not go to heaven?

Hearing these words of Gokarṇa, the noble one, Dhundhukārin who was in front of him and whose mind was afflicted, said: "Even by the śrāddha at Gayā I shall not be liberated. You should think of a means for my emancipation." Hearing these words of him Gokarṇa was amazed.

52-57a. He said: "If by means of śrāddhas you are not getting liberation, then your reaching heaven is impossible. O evil spirit, now, being fearless, resort to your own place. After having thought I shall adopt a means for your liberation." Having heard these words, Dhundhukārin went from there to his place, the bibhītaka tree in thecremation ground. Then, O Nārada, the remaining night Gokarṇa remained there thinking about his liberation. He did not find a means for that. In the morning that Gokarṇa told the account of the night to his relatives and members of his family, so also to brāhmaṇas who knew sacred treatises. When after having pondered over the matter (consulting) sacred treatises, they did not find the means, they eulogized the Sun.

The brāhmaṇas said:

57b-70a. Salutation to you, O Bhāskara, Āditya, Tamohantā (Dispeller of darkness), Gabhastimat (Possesser of rays), Lokasākṣin (Observer of the world), Jagaddhāman (Resort of the world), to you who are saluted by gods and demons, O Dvādaśātman, Harihayabhāsvan (Shining with bay horses), Lokaprabodhaka (Awakener of the world), you always are the resort of the people of pious nature. You are Brahmā; you are Viṣṇu; you are Śiva—the authors of creation, maintenance and destruction. O lord, except you there is no refuge of the living beings in the world. You are Śarva, of the form of the earth, and Bhava, taking up the form of water. You are of the form of fire; you are Rudra; you are air, taking up a fierce form. You are fearful, having the sky as your body. You are the sacrificer, and the lord of beings. You are Mahādeva, Īśāna, the form of the moon, so also the sun. Eight divine images of you pervading the three worlds are offered oblations by the teachers of the Vedas for accomplishing all desires.

You are the Fish, holding the Vedas. You are the excellent Tortoise, supporting the mountain. You are Varāha, supporting the earth; you hold the three worlds; you are Trivikrama (i.e. Viṣṇu); you are Bhārgava (i.e. Paraśurāma) destroying the harmers of brāhmaṇas. You are Rāghava killing those who harm the world. You are Kṛṣṇa removing the burden of the earth. You are Buddha deluding the demons. You are Kalki, the killer of the Mlecchas in every age when piety is declining. You, taking up the form of Brahman, are the creator of gods, demons, men, beasts and birds, of beings moving in the water, of beings of many kinds. O Lord of the host of senses, you are Indra, Dharmarāja (i.e. Yama), Varuṇa, Kubera. You live in the form of the regent of a quarter. You are of three forms; you are to be offered oblations three times (a day); you are having three abodes; you are of the nature of three constituents. You, the Sun, separated in three ways, are alone worshipped by people. O lord of the world, you alone cause the lotuses to bloom.

O best sage, when, having spoken like this, the best brāhmaṇas stood (there), (the Sun) moving in the sky spoke distinctly when they were listening:

Śrī Sūrya said:

70b-84. O best brāhmaṇas, since you extolled me for pacifying the major sin of Dhundhulī's son, listen. This Gokarṇa, a calf, will emancipate him by means of (the reading of) the Bhāgavata for seven days, due to the religious merit of Ātmadeva. By eulogizing (me) with the hymn composed by you, and describing my glory, a man will obtain a divine vehicle, O brāhmaṇas. A man desiring sons, wealth, piety, salvation, will obtain it surely by reciting the Vāñchācintāmaṇi hymn.

Saying so, god Bhāskara, remaining in the sky, ceased (speaking). The brāhmaṇas, with their minds delighted, said 'Well (done)' to Gokarṇa. Then to the assembly of the brāhmaṇas on the auspicious bank of Tuṅgabhadrā, the citizens went to see the very great wonder. Gokarṇa, who had known the truth, who was the reciter, was seated on a high seat. Having saluted Nārāyaṇa and others, he commenced (the reading of the Bhāgavata

for) seven days. 'If the holy text, the word of Viṣṇu is truly a holy place, springing from his lotus like feet, then may the son of Dhundhulī obtain heaven.' Mentally resolving like this, he recited (the Purāṇa) called Bhāgavata, beginning with *Janmādyasya yataḥ* and ending with *Dhīmahi*. Then the evil spirit, having come there, and looking for a seat here and there, took up the form of air and entered a bamboo having seven knots. O Nārada, while the brāhmaṇas, the foremost among the best brāhmaṇas were listening, the son of Dhundhulī, remaining in the hole of the knot everyday listened (to the Purāṇa). When, O Nārada, on the first day the narration came to an end, one knot of the bamboo bursted. It was a great wonder. On the second and other days also the knots bursted like this. When the seventh (knot) bursted he instantly abandoned his condition of an evil spirit. Being one having a divine form, and being adorned with a garland of Tulasī (leaves), wearing yellow garments, dark like a cloud, and full of ornaments, he shone. Saluting his brother Gokarṇa, he, seeing the entire truth, said:

85-95. "O brother, you have kindly freed me from the foulness of an evil spirit. The account of the lord is indeed blessed, which is known to remove the condition of an evil spirit. The (recitation of the Bhāgavata for a) week is also blessed, leading one to Viṣṇu's world. Due to its power, I who was much afflicted, am freed from the condition of an evil spirit. The (recitation of the Bhāgavata for a) week would reduce to ash deliberate, non-deliberate, minor or major sins of speech, mind or act, as fire reduces the fuel to ash. Listen to the holy text of the Bhāgavata in this Bhārata liked even by gods. (Your) position (thereby) would be excellent. The body is said to be an aggregate of sinews, bones, marrow, flesh, blood. It is said to be pure due to relishing the Bhāgavata; and impure otherwise. The body, polluted due to the blemishes of acts, is the recipient of hell. To remove the blemish due to that, it alone is the means. Those (who live) without (reading or listening to) the divine holy text, are born to die only like bubbles in water or gnats among beings. The knot of the heart is broken. All doubts are cut off (i.e. removed). The (effects of his) deeds diminish, when the Bhāgavata is listened to, O brāhmaṇas." When he was speaking like this, an excellent aeroplane came there from Vaikuṇṭha; getting into it, he went to

Viṣṇu's abode. When he went to Viṣṇu's heaven, the minds of all were amazed, and they asked Gokarṇa, the best brāhmaṇa:

The brāhmaṇas said:

O glorious one, all of us, that have gathered here, have listened to the Bhāgavata. For what reason has your brother alone gone to Viṣṇu?

Gokarṇa said:

96-104. Listen. I shall tell (you) the reason for the good course of my brother, hearing which you will also go to Goloka. For a week (the Bhāgavata) should be heard (by you) intent on (observing) a fast, and with (your) minds concentrated upon Kṛṣṇa. That gives an access to Goloka. O brāhmaṇas, again listen to the Bhāgavata for a week, with concentrated minds. It always gives the nectar in the form of Kṛṣṇa's love.

Hearing these words of that Gokarṇa, the best brāhmaṇas settled to listen to the Bhāgavata for a week. O Nārada, with restraint, and with their minds concentrated on Kṛṣṇa, all the brāhmaṇas again listened to the Bhāgavata. At the end (of the narration) of the story, O best sage, lord Kṛṣṇa appeared there. He was lotus-eyed; he held a conch, a disc, a mace and a lotus. He had put on a crown and ear-rings; he was adorned with a garland of wood-flowers. He had put on yellow garments; he was dark like a cloud. He was adorned with bracelets and armlets. Seeing him accompanied by the excellent companions like Viṣvaksena, the sages, gathered on the earth, being delighted, saluted him. O sage, at that the shouts of victory and salutation prevailed everywhere. Then, Viṣṇu, delighting the brāhmaṇas made the sound of (i.e. blew) his conch.

105-114. Then, when the brāhmaṇas were looking on, many aeroplanes, with excellent attendants, came there from Vaikuṇṭha. (Viṣṇu) having embraced Gokarṇa, gave him similarity of his form. At that moment only, he made other listeners dark like clouds wearing yellow, silken garments and crowns and ear-rings; (made them) charming, and wearing garlands of wood-flowers. There was a great wonder also. By Kṛṣṇa's order all the people up to (i.e. including) the cāṇḍālas got into the aeroplanes and went

to heaven. Kṛṣṇa, dear to the cowherds and the cowherdesses, went, along with Gokarṇa, to Goloka, situated above all (other) worlds. There is the charming Vṛndāvana, covered with a hundred peaks. Outside it shines a very wonderful forest covered with hemp. There are many pavilions, wells like Acchoda and pools. There are desire-yielding cows, resorting to the shades of the celestial trees; the son of Nanda, surrounded by young cowherds, with their minds intent upon sporting, plays there. In the midst of this excellent grove is fixed a great fig tree, brightening the charming rampart, decked with masses of gems and gold according to the desire of the Lord of Vṛndāvana. Then shines Śrī Gokula of a wonderful form, resorted to by cowherdesses and adorned by calves in every direction. In it the bright house resided in by Hari (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) shines, in which house of Nanda, they, the lofty ones, are propitiated by Rādhā. The great fortune of the child of a charming figure, meditated upon by (gods) led by (Śiva) the lord of Umā, with their minds, shines more by means of the rays of the lustre of the worlds. By means of the commencement of the seven-day rite called (Bhāgavata) Saptāha, he (i.e. Gokarṇa), born of a cow, obtained the world impossible to be got by means of subsisting on air, water, leaves, parching up one's body, severe austerities, mutterings and sacrificial rites. He who would read or listen to this holy account, goes to Goloka. Then what to say of (him who would read or listent to) Śrī Bhāgavata!

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED NINETYEIGHT

Procedure to be Followed during the Saptāha

Kumāras said:

1-7. Now we shall tell you the manner of listening to the (Bhāgavata recitation during a) week, by which Bhāgavata would accomplish success for those men who have dedicated their minds to Kṛṣṇa. A devout man, after having called an astrologer, and after having honoured him with wealth and garments, should first ask him about the auspicious time. The commence-

ment (of narrating the Bhāgavata) should be made at the auspicious time which he would tell. The months of Śrāvaṇa, Bhādrapada, Āśvina, Kārtika, Mārgaśīrṣa, Jyeṣṭha (and Āṣāḍha) are best for the commencement of the narration; so also the Pūrṇā tithi (i.e. 5th, 10th, 15th lunar days) is auspicious. Tuesdays and Saturdays shall be excluded and the constellations Dhruva and weak ones. The commencement is always recommended on an auspicious conjunction (of planets) and an auspicious lagna (i.e. the moment of the Sun's entrance into a Zodiacal sign). O best sage, when stories from the Purāṇas are (to be read) daily, a wise man should avoid Dvādaśī (the twelfth day) due to the impurity caused to Sūta. For the (reading of) Śrīmad Bhāgavata for a week there is no prohibition. Thus said those who know the past, O divine sage. The wise ones have said that (the reading of) Bhāgavata for a week is a great sacrifice.

8-16. Therefore, invitation should be extended to devotees of Viṣṇu all round: 'There will be a gathering during the week, O best devotees of Viṣṇu. Devotees of Viṣṇu desiring to listen (to the Bhāgavata) should come for it.' For those who come he should carefully make arrangement for their lodging at a holy place, in a grove, or in the village. He should erect a pavilion on the land that is purified. The pavilion should have four pillars with plantain trees, and should have banners in the four directions. A raised seat at its front is recommended for the speaker (i.e. the reader), O sage. The seats of the listeners are to be arranged on both the sides of him. The speaker, the most learned one, should face the north in the gathering. A speaker who knows the meaning and essential nature of the Vedas and holy texts, who is an excellent brāhmaṇa and a devotee of Viṣṇu, who is proficient in (telling) illustrative stories, who is patient, eloquent, free from desire, should be appointed. One removing all doubts should not be appointed. By the side of the speaker there should be another learned wise man. He should remove the doubts of the listeners and should enlighten the ignorant. To avoid any obstacle in (the narration of) the story, he should first worship Gaṇeśa. Then having, in the proper manner, worshipped Durgā, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Brahmā, the Sun and the brāhmaṇas, he should devoutly gratify the deities and the dead ancestors.

17-29. Then the chief listener should worship Viṣṇu repre-

sented in the book. Then having gone round, and having held in the hollow of his hands money, garments and fruits he should, O sage, request Viṣṇu (represented) in the book: "O divine one, you, Kṛṣṇa, have established yourself in this world. O lord, I have resorted to you for freedom from the ocean of the mundane existence. You should by all means make my desire fulfilled without any obstacle. O Keśava, I am your servant." Speaking like this and putting the money before the book, he should also, with his palms folded, salute and request the speaker (i.e. the reader): "O you best brāhmaṇa, of the form of Śuka, O you proficient in all holy texts, remove my ignorance by means of explaining the Bhāgavata." Having thus requested the speaker, he should select five brāhmaṇas for the recitation of the twelve-syllabled formula, O best sage. Having honoured those knowing the rules about singing and instrumental music with money, garments etc., he should at the end of the narration of the story appoint them for the recital (i.e. singing) of the glory of the lord. He who, having given up the anxiety about his wife, wealth, house, sons, listens with a concentrated mind, would obtain the entire fruit. For three watches and a half, beginning from sunrise, it—a sentence or a chapter, should be read and its meaning explained. O Nārada, he should take rest even for a ghaṭikā at mid-day. At the end of the (narration) of the story, the glory of Viṣṇu should be sung. A fast should be observed by the listeners desiring its fruit. A man incapable of doing it, should eat the food fit to be eaten during fast or should a little once (only). The body should be sustained without difficulty with water, or fruit, or milk or ghee only. O Nārada, listen to the rules to be observed by those who take the vow for seven days.

30-44. Those who are not initiated into (worship of) Viṣṇu, are said to have no right for this vow. O best sage, during the week one should observe celibacy, should sleep on the bare ground, and eat from a plate made of leaves everyday. He who is observing the vow, should avoid pulses, honey, oil, others' food, sugarcane juice, food polluted by thought, polluted by act, and stale food, so also onion, garlic, asafoetida, radish and gṛñjana (a kind of garlic). So also a man observing the vow of (reading or listening to the Bhāgavata) story should not eat lotus

stalks and pumpkin gourd. He should not indulge in sexual pleasure, anger, pride, greed, hypocrisy, and jeolousy, so also infatuation, hatred and harm. He who is observing the vow of (reading or listening to the Bhāgavata) story, should avoid censuring Vedas, Viṣṇu's devotees, brāhmaṇas, preceptors, those observing the vow of (serving) a cow, so also women, kings and great men. The wise one who is observing the vow of (reading or listening to the Bhāgavata) should practise truthfulness, purity, kindness, silence, straightforwardness, politeness, and graciousness of mind. A man desiring wealth, desiring a son, desiring victory, or thinking of salvation, should listen to the Bhāgavata. He, having no desire, would obtain Śrī Hari. For its completion, he should fast on the seventh day. He should honour the reader with a cow, land, gold, garments etc. He should cause to give remnants of the food offered to the deity, garlands of Tulasī (leaves) to the listeners. So also with the (help of) those skilled in singing and playing upon musical instruments a festival should be celebrated. The wise one should also listen to the meaning of the Gītā on the next day. Or after every verse with the Gāyatrī hymn, he should make offerings (to Viṣṇu) according to the rules. He should also offer sweetened milk, honey, ghee, sesamum-seeds, rice, barley grains, sugar, priyāla, grapes, dates, lotuses, camphor, sandal, agaru (a kind of sandal), cloves, a thousand leaves of bilva separately. He should recite the (hymn called) Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma for removing obstacles, removing deficiencies and excesses, and for purifying himself. He should devoutly offer sweetened milk to twelve, eighteen or more brāhmaṇas, and (should give them) gold or a cow as a present.

45-52. On this day or the day of Pūrvā Bhādrapadā or Uttarā Bhādrapadā (constellations) he should fashion (the) golden (image of a) lion, should place the Bhāgavata (text) on its back, and writing on it (his name etc.) should give it to the reader. When this is done according to the rule, the Bhāgavata that is listened to would remove all the sins of the listener and would give him good fruit, be the means of religious merit, of the fulfilment of the desire for sensual enjoyments, acquisition of worldly objects and salvation, and would give (i.e. produces) devotion. There is no object in the world that is not secured by this. Therefore, in the world, the Bhāga-

vata is regarded as superior to (other) Purāṇas. The reader is said to be free from eighteen blemishes, and the listener is supposed to be free from thirty-two faults by the wise. The Purāṇa named Śrī Bhāgavata gives men their desired objects. Yet listening to it produces devotion only in a person free from desires. The divine tree called Śrīmad Bhāgavata has starlike shoots; has a good origin; it shines with twelve large boughs (i.e. sections); it grows in the basin of devotion;it has three hundred and thirty-two bright branches (i.e. chapters); it has eighteen thousand leaves (i.e. verses); it gives desired objects; it is easily accessible; and it stands above all. Thus I have told you everything and have done what was desired by you. The youth of Jñāna, Vairāgya and Bhakti gives salvation to people.

Sūta said:

53-54. Having spoken like this, the Kumāras, inundated with the nectar (flowing) from Kṛṣṇa's feet, devotees of the lord, and intent on emancipating the helpless, ceased (speaking). Hearing their words, Nārada, dear to the lord, and with his palms joined, said to them in a voice faltering due to love:

Nārada said:

55-62. I am blessed; I am favoured by you highly devoted to compassion, since at the end of the Bhāgavata-saptāha (i.e. reciting or listening to the Bhāgavata for a week), you have presented Viṣṇu near me.

While Nārada, the best devotee of Viṣṇu, was speaking like this, Śuka, the chief among the meditating saints, (while) roaming, came there. His form was that of a youth of sixteen years; he was lotus-eyed; he was Vyāsa's son; he was the moon to the ocean of knowledge; he was content at heart with whatever (given) at the end of (the narration of) the story, and constantly recited Bhāgavata. The members of the assembly, seeing him of a great lustre, got up and gave him an excellent seat. When he comfortably sat on the seat, lotus-eyed Viṣṇu appeared (there). Śiva with Pārvatī and Brahmā with his sons came there to glorify and see him. Gods among whom Indra was the chief, came there in aeroplanes. The sky was covered by

them. Prahlāda did the beating of time with a quick speed; Uddhava took the cymbals; the divine sage (Nārada) took the lute; Arjuna, through his skill in tunes, formed the musical modes. Indra played upon the tabor; the Kumāras uttered the loud shouts of victory. Vyāsa's son, of unsurpassed virtues, was a (versatile) speaker and of good sentiments. The triad of Jñāna etc. having new forms, just danced in the middle. Seeing the extraordinary glorification Viṣṇu, with his mind pleased, spoke as follows: "O devotees of Viṣṇu, ask for a boon from me who am very much pleased with the narration of the story." Hearing those words, they who were pleased, and with their heart flowing with love, said:

Kumāras said:

63-67. O Murāri (i.e. O Viṣṇu), you will be instantly pleased with the worship (in the form of reading or listening to the Bhāgavata) continued for a week in the very fierce Kali age by men having a short life and overcome by hundreds of obstacles. From you, the soul of everything and the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe, we, resorting to your lotus-like feet, ask for this boon and not any other (boon).

Saying, "Let it be so", Viṣṇu vanished there only. Nārada with his mind pleased, saluted Kumāras. Then those Sanaka and others, Bhṛgu and others and Śuka and others, delighted by drinking the nectar of the story went to their own hermitages. O Śaunaka, since then, Nārada propagated Bhakti along with her two sons over the entire earth.

Śiva said:

68. O dear one, having heard the great story, Śaunaka whose heart was pleased, again asked Sūta who removed all doubts:

Śaunaka said:

69. O you respecting (others), tell me when Śuka told it to the king, when Gokarṇa told it, and Brahmā's sons to the divine sage (Nārada).

Sūta said:

70-72. Śuka commenced (the narration of) the story on the ninth of the bright fortnight of Bhādrapada when the period of three hundred years of Kali after the departure of Śrīkṛṣṇa had passed. Gokarṇa told the story on the 9th day of the bright half of Jyeṣṭha (or Āṣāḍha), after two hundred years had passed from the time Parīkṣit had heard it. O brāhmaṇa, now a thousand years of the Kali age have passed from the time of Parīkṣit. (So) conclude the sacrifice.

The lord said:

73-81a. Hearing these words of him, the best sage Śaunaka completed the sacrifice that continued for a thousand years. These Purāṇas: Brāhma, Pādma, Vaiṣṇava, Kaurma, Matsya, Vāmana, Varāha, Brahmavaivarta, Nāradīya, Bhaviṣyaka, and half of Āgneya were formerly heard by excellent sages like Śaunaka from Sūta Lomaharṣaṇa up to the end of the Dvāpara age. When Baladeva came on a pilgrimage to (the forest) called Naimiṣa Miśrikā, he was called by the best sages. There seeing Sūta seated on an excellent seat, revered (Bala-)Rāma was agitated like the great ocean on a parvan day. O Pārvatī, on the Dvādaśī day of the bright half of Āṣāḍha, at the time of its earlier half, he, Rāma, being stupefied due to what was decided by Kṛṣṇa's Māyā, having darbhas in his hand, struck Lomaharṣaṇa. Then all the hosts of the sages did loud wailing, and their hearts were overcome by sorrow and grief, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain. Then they, full of forgiveness, said humbly to Rāma, the lord of the world:

The sages said:

81b-87a. O Rāma, Rāma, O you of great arms, you, the author of the world, have ignorantly committed harm greater than that due to the murder of a brāhmaṇa. This is actually Vyāsa's disciple, an ancient sage, having a great penance (to his credit). We who had invited him, the narrator of the eighteen Purāṇas, gave him an excellent seat at this sacrificial rite. On (hearing) the story of the lord of the world one obtains long life, O you who honour (others). Therefore, you who promoted the bridge of piety, who are capable of curbing and favouring, who

are the lord of the world, have manifested yourself for the protection of the world.

Speaking like this to Baladeva, O dear one, the sages, remembering the force of destiny, suddenly became silent. Then revered Rāma, killer of his enemies, following the path of the world and the Vedas, pleasing those brāhmaṇas, said:

Śrī Rāma said:

87b-89. O brāhmaṇas, may well-being come to you; listen after casting far away your anger. I know what you like and what gives success to your undertaking. Due to my blessing his son will be very wise. He will narrate to you the holy text desired by you. Tell me the work for which you have invited me.

The lord said:

90-100. Hearing these words of the very noble Rāma, they prompted the lord to murder Balvala. Then, having killed Balvala and pleased the pre-eminent sages and saluting them, he went on a pilgrimage after being permitted by them. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, when Rāma left for the pilgrimage, the chief sages like Śaunaka called Laumaharṣaṇi, and after honouring him placed him in his position for the narration of the remaining (part). With their minds delighted, they listened to seven Purāṇas and a half (beginning with) the greatness of the later part of Āgneya up to Bhāgavata. O you beautiful lady, Satyavatī's son (Vyāsa) was not mentally pleased after having composed seventeen Purāṇas and Bhārata also. Knowing that his heart was sad, revered Nārada, looking like a god, came to the excellent hermitage of Vyāsa. Seeing him, the son of Vāsavī (i.e. Vyāsa) hospitably received Nārada, offered him a seat, and honoured him with a rite according to the rules. Then Nārada said to him: "Tell me fully the cause of your doubt. What do you, with an afflicted mind, think of?" Thus asked by the sage, (Vyāsa) the son of Parāśara, said: "I really do not know the cause of the disturbance of my mind. You are proficient in knowledge. Understand it (i.e. the cause) and tell it to me." Thus requested by him, Nārada, proficient in the knowledge of the

Supreme Spirit, told him the highest truth obtained by him from Brahmā.

Nārada said:

101-110. O son of Parāśara, hear from me the cause due to which the mind of you, the master and the origin of holy texts, has become miserable. O innocent one, having descended on the earth, you have divided the Vedas into parts. You have also composed the Purāṇas along with the Itihāsa, in which, having observed in course of time the practices of the castes and of those living in the four stages of life, you have told them from the three Vedas. All women, śūdras, the twice-born fraternity, those prone to the company of the good, are entitled to listening to it. Religious practices, as are lasting, have been described in them by you. But you have not at all prominently described therein the greatness of Viṣṇu. O sage, in the Kali age, void of all religious practices and rites, and the reservoir of all blemishes, the sinners have no other course than the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's story. This alone is the merit in this terrible Kali age that men are freed from the bondage of their acts by means of narrating the glory of Kṛṣṇa only. Sacrifices, gifts, penance, rites, knowledge, meditation gave success in (ages) like Kṛta. In the same way, O brāhmaṇa, the narration of (Viṣṇu's) name (leads to success) in Kali. Therefore, for the emancipation of men born in the Kali age, you should relate Śrīmad Bhāgavata, by composing which, O dear one, your mind will be pleased and people will be blessed.

The lord said:

111-121. Having thus ordered Vyāsa of unlimited lustre, he, O dear one, constantly singing the virtues of Viṣṇu, went as he desired. After Nārada had gone, Vyāsa who saw everything, composed this great text, viz. Śrīmad Bhāgavata. Having taught the four Vedas to Paila and others according to the rule, he gave all the Purāṇa-texts to Sūta. That text of the Bhāgavata was heard by the son of Lomaharṣana, when it was being told to the king Parīkṣit by Śuka. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, he properly told it to sages like Śaunaka. It is above all Purāṇas

and best among them. Men whose heart is attached to it find interest in nothing else. In their minds, Kṛṣṇa, son of Nanda, shines. O you mother of the chief of (my) attendants, I have told you the entire greatness of Śrī Bhāgavata, which you had asked me to narrate for crossing over the (mundane) world. A man who devoutly listens to or he too who reads with approval the greatness (of Śrī Bhāgavata) along with many historical accounts leading to devotion and salvation, obtains the highest position. Having studied it, a brāhmaṇa would obtain (the knowledge of) the Vedas, a kṣatriya would get victory, a vaiśya (would obtain) wealth, and a śūdra gets the best position by just listening to it.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED NINETYNINE

The Glory of Yamunā

The sages said:

1. O Sūta tell us the glory of Yamunā in detail—to whom it was spoken, and by whom it was spoken—along with a story.

Sūta said:

2. Once Pāṇḍu's son, desiring to hear auspicious knowledge from Saubhari, went to his place, and having saluted him, asked him like this:

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

3. O brāhmaṇa, tell me about that holy place which is (the best) among the holy places on the bank of Yamunā, and which is (even) superior to the land of the birth of Viṣṇu.

Saubhari said:

4-8. Once the two pre-eminent sages, Nārada and Parvata, moving in the sky, (while) looking (here and there), saw the very beautiful Khāṇḍava forest. From the sky they descended there and sat on the auspicious bank of Kālindī, and having rested

awhile, entered her water to bathe. King Śibi, son of Uśīnara, hunting in the forest, saw the two, and waiting for them to come out, sat on the bank of the river. The two who after having duly bathed had put on garments, who were saluted by the king with his head (bent down), sat on the bank. Seeing thousands of golden sacrificial posts there, Śibi, free from pride, spoke to Nārada and Parvata:

Śibi said:

9-10. O pre-eminent sages, tell me, whose sacrificial posts these are. Who performed a sacrifice here—(was it) a god or a man? Leaving holy places like Kāśī, which man performed a sacrifice here? What peculiarity, O treasures of knowledge, does it have (in a greater extent) than other holy places?

Nārada said:

11-14. Formerly Hiraṇyakaśipu, having conquered deities like Indra, secured the kingdom of the three worlds, and entertained great pride. His son was Prahlāda, highly devoted to Nārāyaṇa. The wicked (Hiraṇyakaśipu), whose auspiciousness had perished, bore a great malice against him. Due to that malice, Viṣṇu, taking up the body of Nṛsiṁha, instantly killed the lord of demons, and gave the kingdom of heaven to (Indra) the lord of heaven. Having obtained his own position, the lord of gods, remembering the virtues of Viṣṇu, and saluting Bṛhaspati's feet with his head (bent down) said to him:

Indra said:

15-16. O preceptor, Viṣṇu, the supporter of the world, taking up the form of Nṛsiṁha, gave me the kindom of deities. I desire to worship him with sacrifices. O Guru, tell me (about) a pure place and also (about) the brāhmaṇas. You, doing good to us, should not delay in this matter.

Bṛhaspati said:

17-19. For you there is the charming and extremely holy Khāṇḍava forest which contains (the trees like) ketakī, aśoka, bakula and (also) bees intoxicated by honey. There is Yamunā, auspicious, holy and purifying the three worlds. On remember-

ing her she gives heaven, and on death Brahmā's position. O lord of gods, if you desire the continuous well-being of your relatives, worship Viṣṇu with many sacrifices on her bank.

Nārada said:

20-27. Having heard Bṛhaspati's words, and quickly getting into a vehicle, Indra came to this forest of him which caused happiness, along with Bṛhaspati and the materials of sacrifice. Having come here, and having seen this forest, he obtained great joy. Prompted by Guru, Indra, choosing the seven sages, the sons of Brahmā, the brāhmaṇas, worshipped the lord of the world with sacrifices. The lord, pleased with him, came, along with Brahmā and Śiva, to Indra's sacrifice, where there was a great festivity. That Indra, of a crooked mind, seeing the triad of gods, quickly got up from his seat, and along with the sages, saluted them. Quickly getting down from their vehicles, they sat near him on seats of excellent gold, and shone like fires on altars. With Śiva and Brahmā who had white and red bodies, Viṣṇu, of a dark complexion, wearing yellow garments, shone like a cloud on two peaks. Indra washed their feet and took that water on his head. Being full of joy, he spoke sweet words:

Indra said:

28-37. O gods, this sacrifice performed by me has become instantly fruitful, since you, difficult to see even by meditating saints are seen (by me). O Viṣṇu, you alone have taken up the three forms. Yet as in a crystal, the appearance of multiplicity in you in respect of qualities is false. As fire concealed in pieces of wood does not manifest itself without friction, in the same way you remaining in the hearts of your devotees (do not manifest yourself) without deep devotion. Devotion to you alone, would be helpful to all beings. By that (devotion) entertained by Prahlāda, gods became happy. O god, we, given to sensual pleasures, have our hearts screened by your Māyā. We, the servants of your feet, do not know your nature correctly. O Brahman, O Mahādeva, since you two also are the preceptors of the world due to his greatness, you are not different from him. Whatever is said with words, thought of by the mind is his Māyā only. So all are away from that pair(?). He who sees this entire visible world to be

unreal, would not think of (sensuous pleasures). O Śiva, those who resort to Viṣṇu's feet, cross the water held by you on your head. O Brahman, may I have, in existence after existence, a great liking for his feet, resembling lotuses. Due to it being agitated by her (Māyā's) glance, the entire world, Mahat etc. springs up. There is none else given to kindness like you who give happiness (even) to your enemies. That which is described as your kindness, that removes the misery of your people is (just) (due to) ignorance, O Nṛhari.

Nārada said:

38-46. Having thus praised Viṣṇu, the lord of gods remained bent before him. He who had applied (i.e. concentrated) his mind with a desire to hear his words, looked great.

The sages, having thus heard the praise of Ramā's lord, done by Indra in the assembly, said: "Well (done), well done." (They said:) "O Indra, (even) the devotion of those who practise severe penance for a hundred years is not like your devotion to Viṣṇu. The Yoga with eight parts, by means of which glory is obtained, is not easy. The refuge of men is renunciation with equanimity of mind and devotion to him. When the dedication of that act which is performed with the wealth earned in pursuance of the duties of one's own caste is made to Viṣṇu, that is devotion, giving happiness. He should not censure other deity, (and) him who salutes (the deity) with Viṣṇu in his mind. He should not ignore Vedic words. Such a devotee is dear to those who everyday listen to the virtues of Viṣṇu, who sing his glory, who remember him, resort to him, worship him, who salute him with servitude, who form friendship with him, who offer him their possessions, who do not desire salvation etc. O Indra, you also devoutly propitiate the lord of the world. Do not desire anything from him. Then you will be blessed."

Nārada said:

47. When Indra was thus advised by the sages, Viṣṇu, the lord, having heard about the devotion that was done to him, that could be resorted to by all, and that would cause the crossing of the three worlds, spoke sweet words to Indra in the assembly.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED

The Episode of a Bhilla and a Lion

The lord said:

1-15a. O lord of gods, it is no wonder that these very wise sages respect and honour my devotion, (leading to) my position, since these who teach knowledge to those living in the three worlds, always propagate the Vedic path that has perished. You, though attached to the enjoyments in heaven, have devoutly approached me. What wonder is there, since Bṛhaspati is your preceptor. O best of gods, free from desires, worship me with sacrifices with many gifts. You will quickly reach my position which is near. At every sacrifice present many prasthas (particular measures) of jewels. This place will be called Indraprastha. O Brahmā, having brought Sarasvatī and Gaṅgā purifying the world, fashion here the best holy place (called) Prayāga. O Śiva, you establish here Kāśī and Śivakāñcī and Gokarṇa. Always live here along with Gaurī. O sons of Brahmā, proficient in metaphysical and worldly knowledge, fashion here seven holy places by means of the power of your abstract meditation. O Guru, you set up the holy place Nigamodbodhaka. Here the knowledge of Vedas would be had even without studying (them). The two highest souls would have the recollection of their former existence. I shall found here very beautiful Dvārakā, where Gomatī has joined the sea. O Indra, I shall also fashion here Kośalā and Madhvaraṇya, where I shall descend through the bodies of Rāma (i.e. Balarāma) and Kṛṣṇa. I shall also fashion here Badaryāśrama, the abode of Nara and Nārāyaṇa, where, O chief of gods, I shall always live. With a desire for your good only, I shall found the two excellent holy places, Haridvāra and Puṣkara. I shall found here all the holy places that are in Naimiṣa, on the Kālañjara mountain and the bank of Sarasvatī.

Nārada said:

15b-26. O Śibi, having heard those auspicious words of Viṣṇu, and having done and seen that, Brahmā, Śiva and others did as was said (by him). That lord of the gods again worshipped

Lakṣmī's lord with many sacrifices in this place full of all holy places. In front of Kṛṣṇa, he gave prasthas of jewels to brāhmaṇas. 'May this Nārāyaṇa, the soul of all, be pleased with me.' Since then this holy place is called Indraprastha. One who dies at this holy place full of all holy places, is not reborn. The brāhmaṇas, having received those prasthas of jewels given by Indra, gave him there, in the assembly, a blessing that would not be fruitless: "O Indra, may Govinda be pleased with this gift of you. May you also have steady devotion for him. O lord, in this land of (sacred) rites formerly you, having a desire, performed a hundred sacrifices. Due to that religious position you obtained a place among the gods. Now you, without any desire, have worshipped Viṣṇu with sacrifices. Falling from your position, you will be (born) as the best brāhmaṇa. There (i.e. in that existence) also, you, worshipping Viṣṇu in accordance with your (caste-)duty, will remember the act like the sacrifice that you did. On remembering that, you, abandoning your house and going to holy places with your father, will come to this Śakra-tīrtha. Resorting to the fourth stage of life you will caste your body here. Then you, having a divine body, will get into an aeroplane brought by the attendants and bright like the sun, and will reach the position of Śrī Hari (i.e. Viṣṇu)."

Nārada said:

27-32. Having heard this blessing of the brāhmaṇas and their words indicative of the future, the lord of gods was extremely delighted, O Śibi. Having honoured with (gifts of) wealth etc. Brahmā's sons, the priests at the sacrifice, Indra, honouring Bṛhaspati, went to heaven. O Śībi, Indra, full of devotion for Viṣṇu, having ruled there, with his religious merit exhausted, came down to Hastināpura. There was a brāhmaṇa, Śivaśarman (by name), who had mastered the Vedas and Vedāṅgas. His wife was Guṇavatī, of a very significant name. To her was born Indra, who served Viṣṇu, at an auspicious time. Astrologers were called. Seeing the auspicious time they said:

The astrologers said:

33-36 O Śivaśaraman, this your boy will be dear to Viṣṇu. He wlll emancipate your family. We are telling the truth and

not a lie. When he will have the body of thirteen years (i.e. when he will be thirteen years old), he, rich with knowledge learnt (i.e. got) by him, will marry. Then having produced a good son he will be an anchorite. The wise one, wandering to holy places, will renounce the world. There is the excellent river in Indra's Khāṇḍavavana. On her bank is Hariprastha. He will die there.

Nārada said:

37-44. Having heard the auspicious words uttered by the astrologers, he then named his son Viṣṇuśarman. Having dismissed them by (giving them) wealth, the intelligent one thought: 'I whose son will be Viṣṇu's devotee, am blessed. This son will accomplish for me the four stages of human life. He will die at the holy place. Who else is lucky like me?' Thinking like this in his mind, Śivaśarman got performed the ceremony to be performed at the birth of a child through the brāhmaṇas on an auspicious day. And when the son completed seven years, the best brāhmaṇa performed, in his eighth year, his thread ceremony in the month of Caitra. O king, after having imparted him education till the twelfth year he united the son with a wife, O Śibi. The intelligent Viṣṇuśarman having produced a son on his wife made up his mind, free from carnal desire, for visiting holy places. Having approached his father, and having saluted both his feet, the very wise Viṣṇuśarman, remembering the sages' words, said:

Viṣṇuśarman said:

45-49. O father, allow me. Having resorted to the third stage of life, causing good company, I (shall) worship Viṣṇu. Wife, house, wealth, children, friends are perishable. A wise man is not attached to them like bubbles on water. By means of Vedic study and progeny I have paid off the two debts (of the sages and forefathers). I, free from desires, (now) desire to offer a sacrifice to Viṣṇu. Having given up attachment for the constituents of nature I desire to stay at an excellent holy place, as long as my destiny allows.

Thus address by the son, the very intelligent father, remembering the words of the astrologers, and being desireless for (i.e. disugsted with) the mundane existence, said:

Śivaśarman said:

50-54. This is the time for resorting to the fourth stage of life for me also who am free from egoism. Having abandoned objects of senses like poison, I shall resort to the nectar in the form of Viṣṇu. O son, in this old age, my mind does not find delight in the house like an elephant brought from a forest and tied. Your younger brother Suśarman will support the family left by us two, like knowledge supporting a man forsaken by wealth and family. Your mother, a loyal wife, will (like to) follow me, renouncing the world, as brilliance follows the sun at the end of the day. Therefore, we too, not known by (i.e. without the knowledge of) your mother and thinking of Viṣṇu's lotus-like feet, (shall) go, O dear one.

Nārada said:

55-78a. Thus thinking, the two, desiring salvation, leaving (the members of) the family (that were) asleep, moved out of the house, and went. O Śibi, the two, free from egoism, wandered, and came to the excellent place, Śakraprastha, causing auspiciousness. Viṣṇuśarman who had come here, having seen the sacrificial posts laid by him in his former birth, remembered his contact with Viṣṇu. And the intelligent one said to his father: "Formerly (i.e. in my former birth) I was Indra. With a desire to please Viṣṇu, I performed sacrifices here. Here only, Viṣṇu, loving his devotees, was pleased with me. The brāhmaṇas, the seven sages, were pleased by me with prasthas of jewels. They only gave me devotion to Viṣṇu, salvation and birth. All, Viṣṇu and others, have put up holy places elsewhere. This holy place, Indraprastha, is full of all holy places. The best sages had told that I would die here only. After that I would obtain Viṣṇu's feet. I remember all this. These two, Gaṅgā and Sarasvatī, were brought from his own world by Brahmā; due to their contact this is called Prayāga. This is Kāśī, Śiva's city, in the eastern region of Prayāga. At the distance of four hastas there is an island. A man dead on it is not reborn. At the western region of Kāśī, at a distance of eightyfour hastas, there is Śivakāñcī founded by Śiva and giving salvation to the dead. This holy place called Gokarṇa, is very dear to Śiva. It is established on a portion of land measuring eight hastas. To the west of the chief

holy place is this auspicious Dvārāvatī. A man dead within a distance of two hundred and eighty hastas from here gets four arms. Then to the eastern region of this is Kośala, dear to people. It measures seventytwo hastas and its sight is meritorious. This is Madhuvana, O dear one, founded by Viṣṇu himself, which is to the west and which measures forty hastas. O dear one, to the north of this is the abode of Nara and Nārāyaṇa. It stands on a piece of ground measuring fortyfour hastas. This holy place is Haridvāra, situated in the south of it. It is seen on a piece of land measuring one hundred and twenty hastas. This is the holy place Puṣkara, the crest-jewel of holy places. O dear one, it is situated on a piece of ground measuring forty-eight hastas. At a distance of one krośa from Prayāga, in the eastern direction, are seven holy places of the seven sages. This is the group of seven holy places. Near the seven holy places there are many other holy places, in which at every step a dead man becomes one with four arms. At a distance of one krośa from Prayāga, in the western region, is the holy place named Nigamodbodhaka, formerly founded by Guru. The distance between the seven holy places and Nigamodbodhaka is great. O dear one, this is the holy place Indraprastha, formerly founded by deities. It is extended up to a yojana in the east and the west. The great sages have said that four yojanas to the south of Yamunā is the limit of Indraprastha. He who casts his body here in (the confluence of) the three deities, is unborn."

Nārada said:

78b-79a. O Śibi, hearing these words of his son, the brāhmaṇa Śivaśarman having a doubt, said to his son, truthful of words.

Śivaśarman said:

79b-82. How should I know that formerly you were the lord of gods; you performed sacrifices here; you pleased the brāhmaṇas with (presents of) jewels? O son, do that by which I would have the truth of what is told by you. Wherefrom did you hear about this limit of Indraprastha, since from the time you had understanding you did not leave the house? From me only you have studied the four Vedas with the Aṅgas. How did you have the knowledge of the acts done in the former birth?

Viṣṇuśarman said:

83-85. Formerly the sages had given me a boon causing the recollection of the former existence. This recollection of this holy place is had by me from them only. O father, bathe here in this holy place, viz. Nigamodbodhaka. You will obtain knowledge difficult to obtain, giving you the ability to recollect your former birth. You will recollect even my behaviour in my former existence by touching the water of this holy place. I tell you the truth, O father.

Nārada said:

86-101. When the best brāhmaṇa Śivaśarman, after having heard this was ready to bathe in the holy place Nigamodbodhaka for the recollection of his former birth, there came running a bhilla followed by a lion. His limbs were full of great fear; he was panting; he was overcome by fatigue. He was of a harmful nature; he killed (people) on the way; he always robbed merchants. His body was dark. His hair was tawny. He was short. His eyes were like those of a cat. He had a lance in his hand; his figure was fearful. The man existed as it were by sin. Then seeing at a distance after him a lion the father and son quickly climbed a nearby tree, and remained (on it), saying, 'O Kṛṣṇa, free us from this untimely death.' O best king, the bhilla, seeing the lion (pursuing him) faster to seize him, was afraid, and proceeded to climb up the tree. The impetuous lion seized him, climbing (up the tree) at his feet, knocked him down with his back on the ground, and mounted on him. The bhilla too, who was pained and was under (the lion), tore the lion's belly with his lance in such a way that the mass of his entrails, smeared with a stream of blood came out. The lion, with a piteous roar, pounded the bhilla's head, and he died instantly. When the two died, there came down, O king, attendants with a group of two aeroplanes, that were fashioned with crystal stones, that were decorated with multitudes of jewels, that had charming pictures (painted on them), that were adorned with snow-walls, that had windows (decked) with rubies, the bells of which were tinkling, that had charming raised seats, that had cushions, that shone with lofty flags, that had high arches, that looked beautiful due to a hundred doors, that were clear like mirrors due to their

floors resembling new corals, along with (i.e. in which were seated) two attendants whose complexion was like fresh clouds, on whose ears were charming rings, who had in their hands conches, discs, maces and lotuses, who had put on yellow garments, whose eyes resembled fully bloomed lotuses, the anklets round whose feet were making a deep (tinkling) sound, who had rows of bracelets round their forearms, whose chests looked charming due to pearl necklaces, whose faces had curly hair over them, whose couples of eyebrows had cast down the bow of Cupid.

102-111a. The bhilla and the lion, even before life left them, gave up their bodies and remained in a natural state due to the power of this holy place. The attendants of Viṣṇu, bringing the aeroplanes near them, who were having no dress or form, said to them: "O bhilla, best of men, O lion, the lord of beasts, know us to be Viṣṇu's attendants who have come from Vaikuṇṭha (or from Viṣṇu). We shall take you to his place. It is true. There are no distresses there. Getting into your respective aeroplane, go quickly. Do not tarry." The bhilla and the lion, got into their respective aeroplanes, and full of amazement, spoke to the attendants of (Viṣṇu), the lord of Lakṣmī: "O best deities, listen to our words. Due to your sight knowledge of the highest truth is produced (in us). In this existence we have not done the slightest good act. By your favour we are having the recollection of our former deeds. We ate flesh; we were engaged in killing animals; our mind and senses were cruel; we were born in sinners' families; we cause fear when looked at. In such a world, we were sinners. Due to what religious merit, we have seen (you)? Due to what religious merit shall we have absorption into Śrī Hari?"

The two attendants said:

111b-117. Indeed due to your dying at this holy place, formerly fashioned by (Bṛhaspati,) the preceptor of gods, you saw us, and (would get) the wonderful absorption (into Viṣṇu). You will soon obtain (i.e. reach) the position of the lord of Lakṣmī. Sins like the murder of a brāhmaṇa roar till the time this holy place of Bṛhaspati is not seen. As darkness perishes on sunrise, in the same way sins perish on seeing Nigamodbodhaka.

This holy place, called Indraprastha, purified Indra. Here he worshipped Viṣṇu with sacrifices with many presents. Viṣṇu pleased (by them), gave him a boon. Hear (it): "O Indra, those men, even killers, who cast their bodies at your holy place, full of all holy places, are equal to me."

Nārada said:

118. Speaking like this, the two best attendants took the two and went to Viṣṇu's place, having gone to which a man does not get drowned in the ocean of the world (i.e. the worldly existence).

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED ONE

Śarabha's Story

Nārada said:

1-2. The two, the father and the son, got down from the tree, and seeing that even sinners got the position of Viṣṇu, were very much amazed. The best brāhmaṇa Śivaśarman, having heard the praise, expressed by the (two) attendants, of the holy place, spoke to Viṣṇuśarman, his son:

Śivaśarman said:

3-6. The bhilla and the lion have easily reached that position which is not easy to be reached by the brāhmaṇas even with penance practised. Observe the greatness of the holy place. It is not possible to praise in appropriate terms this best holy place, due to the power of which those who had committed sins from birth to death have obtained identity of form with Viṣṇu, O son? What a great disparity there is between the divine birth of Brahmā, which is from pure Sattva and difficult to be had even by gods on the one hand, and the Tamas-born lion and bhilla on the other! But this holy place is having a wonderful efficacy. O dear one, a being after having reached the end (of the fruits) of his actions. falls from the position of Brahman. (But) a being

meeting death here (in this holy place), fashioned by (Bṛhaspati) the preceptor of the gods, has no fall from Viṣṇu's position.

Nārada said:

7-16. O king, the best brāhmaṇa, having actually seen the greatness of this holy place of Bṛhaspati, proceeded to bathe there. Having washed his face, teeth, feet and purified his mind, and having put on a garment with five hems, and having tied his tuft of hair, he remembered Viṣṇu, with the recitation of the verse *Aśvakrāntā* . . . He touched the clay on the bank, made a mark (on his forehead) with it, and again got into the water. There, plunging into the water and facing the current, he again got up. Remembering Viṣṇu and Gaṅgā, purifying the people, he again plunged. Again getting up he remembered the seven cities[1] like Ayodhyā; again dedicating his mind to Govinda, he plunged into the water. Having bathed duly he put on garments that were washed; and having come out the best brāhmaṇa put a mark (on his forehead). The restrained one put darbhas into his hands, on his feet and tufted hair. He duly performed the sandhyā (prayer) and offered oblations of three kinds. The honoured one made a respectful offering to the Sun with flowers, and the best brāhmaṇa, putting his folded palms on his head, saluted (the Sun). The best brāhmaṇa offered worship to Viṣṇu whose feet are revered by the world, beginning with an invocation and ending with an offering of eatables. Having performed the rites and seated comfortably, he, remembering fully the acts of his former birth, said to his son like that:

Śivaśarman said:

17-26. O Viṣṇuśarman, O dear one, your words are not false, since due to a bath here I had the recollection of my deeds in the former birth. O glorious one, listen to what I tell you. Formerly I was born in the family of wealthy and religious merchants. My father named Śarabha lived in the city of Kānyakubja. Resorting to the wealth of piety he obtained much

1. Saptapurī—The seven cities that are said to be so sacred that death at any one of them is the giver of eternal happiness. They are: Ayodhyā, Mathurā, Māyā, Kāśī, Kāñcī, Avantikā, and Dvārāvatī.

wealth by trade. He, with his body seized by old age and his mind afflicted by anxiety, passed a long time, (but) a son was not born to him. The best merchant day and night thought like this: 'My wealth, though collected to a large extent, is in vain without a son. Even a rich person having no son is indebted to his dead ancestors, as a cloud full of water but not showing (it), is to the cātakas. A man conquers the three worlds by means of progeny having piety as the foremost (virtue), as a king conquers an enemy difficult to conquer by means of power[1] of three kinds. Pure progeny pleases parents of good minds as sweet and true words that are spoken please friends and foes. The glory of the father enhances by means of the son's prosperity, as the pure water of the ocean by means of the moon. Therefore, a man should strive with his body or wealth to beget a son. Without him the two (i.e. the body and wealth) of men, having (momentary) life like that (of a flash) of lightning, are useless.'

27-34. When he was thinking like this, the excellent sage, Devala, having suprasensual knowledge, came there to give (him) a boon. Seeing him coming (my) father got up from (his) seat, and giving him a respectful offering and water to wash his feet with, saluted the sage with his head (bent down). Having made him sit on the seat offered with his own hand, my father asked the best sage Devala, of divine appearance: "O best sage, welcome to you. (I hope) there is happiness in your family, and the religious observances like penance and study of the Vedas are free from obstacles. I hope, guests come to your hermitage at the (proper) time. I hope, the trees in your hermitage bear fruits as desired by you. I hope, tigers etc. coming to your hermitage do not entertain hostility towards deer etc. as brothers towards their brothers. Your moving about on the earth gives joy to the householders. How (can it be) otherwise? How can they, engaged in (the affairs in) their houses, have your sight? O sage, granted that you, having your mind fixed on the dust particles on Viṣṇu's feet have absolutely no desire for anything; but quickly tell me about the purpose of your arrival."

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1. Śakti: regal power. It has three parts or constituents: Prabhu-śakti or Prabhāva-śakti (the majesty or pre-eminent position of the king himself); Mantra-śakti (the power of good counsel); Utsāha-śakti (the power of energy).

Śivaśarman said:

35. Thus addressed that sage Devala, honoured by gods, desiring to know the thought in his mind, said to the great trader:

Devala said:

36-41. O best merchant, you have righteously collected much wealth, with which, O you knowing piety, perform obligatory and optional rites. A man gets respect in the king's assembly due to wealth, as a good (i.e. brave) warrior gets success in a battle due to valour. A householder, getting wealth, makes a great advance, as a bull, getting grains ripe in autumn, gets nourishment, O chief merchant. Relatives and other people do not leave the wealthy persons as bees do not abandon a tree with flowers containing honey. Due to want of wealth, the householders are fully reduced to feebleness, as the lakes without water in summer. O chief merchant, that ample wealth is there in your house. Why then, are your limbs feeble? (Please) tell me, if it is not a secret.

The merchant said:

42-45. You are like the fathers specially engaged in instructing (people) in their welfare. What is there to be concealed by men like me, who are (just) like your sons? O best sage, due to your favour I am fully happy. I am unhappy only due to want of a son in my old age. Know that the feebleness of my limbs is due to that, O best sage. I am afraid (of the repayment) of the debt to my dead ancestors, and of falling down (due to the non-repayment). O sage, suggest an expedient by which I shall have a son. For people like you there is nothing that cannot be done on the earth.

Śivaśarman said:

46-47. Having heard these words of the best merchant, Devala, having made his mind steady for a moment, and with his eyes closed, thought. Devala, having suprasensual knowledge, saw the obstacle in my father's having a child, and recollecting (it) said:

Devala said:

48-62. O vaiśya, I shall tell you what beautiful idea this your religious wife formerly had in her mind. 'O Gaurī, O you dear to Śambhu, when I shall be pregnant, I shall please you with foods having the six flavours;[1] (so also) with incense, rows of lights, tāmbūlas, dances, songs coming out of lutes, and smearings of various kinds.' Your wife having promised like this in front of her friends remained devoutly waiting for the time (of pregnancy). This your wife conceived in that month only. Then all her friends of affectionate hearts spoke to her: "O fortunate one, the pregnancy longed for by you, has been bestowed on you. Therefore, do what is promised to the goddess. Otherwise, there would be an obstacle due to the change wrought by her. Goddesses give boons or curses when they are (either) propitiated or angered." Thus addressed by her friends your highly virtuous, loyal wife, full of joy, modestly said to you: "O lord, I desire to worship Gaurī fulfilling all desires, due to whose grace I have had my desired object." O best merchant, hearing these auspicious words of your wife, you took her to be pregnant. Being delighted with great gaiety you instantly ordered your servants to bring the requisites of worship. You then gave her all the things brought by them, so also honey, food, grapes, perfumes, etc. Then she, calling all her friends, said to them: "O friends, taking the collection of materials brought for the worship of Ambikā, you, taking the requisites of worship, go to the temple of Ambikā, and please the goddess with worship laid down by the rules. In our family a pregnant woman does not move out of the house. Therefore, I shall not come. You (please) go to worship her."

63-81. Thus ordered, the friends, taking the materials (of worship), went to the temple of Ambikā, which was the abode of intoxicated bees moving (here and there). It was crowded with groups of mango trees on which flocks of cuckoos were sporting. It was adorned with swans, cranes and geese. There were spotless lotuses. It was surrounded by parrots and (other) birds talking about the virtues of Mahādeva. There were the friends of Umā engaged in sprinkling garlands and creepers. There the ground was purified by light plantings of the steps

1. Ṣaḍ-rasa: The six flavours: pungent, sour, sweet, saltish, bitter, and astringent.

of the lord of Umā. There were celestial trees on the boundary of the water bound by crystal stones. It was resounding with (the sound of) the gandharvas that were singing, accompanying the dance of Pārvatī's lord. There the mango tree, campaka trees, koraka trees were slightly tossed by gentle breezes. The bowers of creepers had the echoes of the notes of the dancing peacocks. It was brightened by her sports, and had flashing brightness like that of jewels. Those (friends) whose husbands were alive went there and saluted the daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain; and going round her (image) keeping (it) to their right, they said with devotion: "O Jagadambā, salutation to you. Give us happiness, O you who are dear to Śiva. Accept this offering brought for your worship. There is a merchant Śarabha by name. He has a charming wife. She longed for pregnancy. This worship of you is for having had it. Due to your grace, O you dear to Śambhu, she had that foetus (i.e. she became pregnant). We have laid before you this offering to worship you. In her family a pregnant woman does not move out of the house. Therefore, O goddess, she has not come; be pleased and accept this (offering)." O vaiśya, having said like that to her, the friends of your wife offered the offering duly and worshipped her with sandal etc. Not receiving any reply from Gaurī, they returned home. They told their friend that Śiva's beloved was dejected. Hearing these words of them, the vaiśya woman, being uneasy, thought: 'Why was Gaurī not pleased? She knows my devotion for her. She knows the worship I offered to her. How can the internal (thoughts) and external (behaviour) of men be not known to (deities) like her? She also knows the reason for which I did not go there. Why was she not pleased by the offering made by me? I do not see any other reason for her dissatisfaction, except my not having gone to that charming temple. What has gone by cannot be changed. After I am delivered of the foetus, I shall go to her temple for worshipping her. Salutation to that wife of Mahādeva. May she cause happiness.' O vaiśya, speaking like this, your wife remained carrying the foetus.

Śivaśarman said:

82. O Viṣṇuśarman, the father, knowing this former account, asked the very wise, best sage, Devala:

The merchant said:

83-84. O sage, that your daughter-in-law offered the worship as promised. Tell me the cause of Pārvatī's dejection; since she herself knows the reason why she did not go there, and it was also told to her friends. Then why did she become dejected?

Devala said:

85-86. O best merchant, listen, I am telling you the reason for which Pārvatī's disappointment, destroying the foetus, took place. When her friends had returned after worshipping Skanda's mother, Vijayā full of curiosity, said to Pārvatī:

Vijayā said:

87-88. O Girijā, these ladies devoutly made an offering to you. Then, O you of an excellent face, why were you not pleased? To please you they worshipped you with incense, lights and offerings of food. (Instead of being pleased) why are you, on the contrary, disappointed?

Devala said:

89. O merchant, hearing these words of her friend, the goddess, honoured by excellent gods, told her friend Vijayā, the cause of her dejection.

Pārvatī said:

90-96. I know, O friend Vijayā, that the merchant's wife was unable to move out of the house through lack of discrimination for pregnancy (*corrupt reading*). Her friends, prompted by her, came to worship me. (Deities) like me do not accept the worship offered through others' hands. Had her husband come that would have been well. Her foetus neglected by me will fall out (immaturely). O friend, if a lady causes that vow which she herself cannot practise, to be practised by her husband, then the vow of the two does not fail. Or, after having asked (the permission of) her husband, she of a concentrated mind, (could get it practised) by a pre-eminent brāhmaṇa. Since she did not come herself and did not worship me, therefore, I have made her pregnancy void and

fruitless. If again, the couple will come and devoutly worship me then they will have a son.

Devala said:

97-101a. O merchant, that curse was not heard by you, or your wife or the friends, so also the favour granted by her. Due to this ignorance of you two, not knowing the counter-rite giving happiness in this world and the next, a son was not born to you. O merchant, I have told you this reason for your not having a child as formerly Vasiṣṭha had told king Dilīpa. As having heard that the king propitiated Nandinī, in the same way, along with your wife propitiate Gaurī, fulfilling desires. As she, being propitiated by king Dilīpa gave him a son, similarly propitiate Gaurī; she will give you a son.

The merchant said:

101b-103. O sage, who is that king Dilīpa, and who is that Nandinī, having propitiated whom that best king obtained a son? Why did the king, leaving the gods like Śiva, giving the fruits to the three castes, propitiate her only for (obtaining) a son? O sage, tell me all this that I ask you. Hearing it, I, with my wife, shall serve that daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain.

Śivaśarman said:

104. O Viṣṇuśarman, the sage, having heard these words spoken by the polite merchant, my father, commenced telling him Dilīpa's account, very holy in the world.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED TWO

The Story of King Dilīpa

Devala said:

1-16a. O very wise one, listen to the divine, wonderful account of king Dilīpa, which removes the sin of those who hear it. In Vaivasvata Manu's family was (born) the best king Dilīpa

like Prācīnabarhis in Svāyambhuva Manu's (family). That king, best among the religious, protecting the earth justly, pleased the people with his rich virtues. The queen, the wife of that king, the daughter of the lord of Magadha, named Sudakṣiṇā, was like Śacī to the lord of heaven. Even after a long time had passed, a son was not born to the queen. The sovereign, the lord of Kośala, thus thought in his mind: 'I have held (under my control) the earth adorned with the gems like the ocean, the great Meru mountain etc. There is nothing wanting that should lead to my disgrace. At the proper time I have practised the three objects of human life. I have not opposed it. Yet in the mind of me who am childless, there is no happiness. With sacrifices I have worshipped Viṣṇu; so also the best gods like Indra. Everywhere on the earth I have got fashioned tanks, groves and wells. I have, with devotion, satisfied brāhmaṇas and guests with (presents of) cows, land, gold, garments, and with meals having the six (kinds of) tastes. Having justly uprooted the kings in battles for the maintenance (of piety), I have increased my treasury with great wealth. Those who went astray, who were arrogant, who violated their duties, who were averse to their dead ancestors and deities, and who (therefore) deserved punishment, were punished by me. On the five parvan days, the day sacred to Viṣṇu, to the Sun, on a day on which a rite in honour of the dead ancestors is performed, on the tenth and eleventh days I have not waited upon my wife. I never ignored my wife who had bathed at (the end of her) menstrual period; so also (I approached her) even at other times when requested by her. At that time I had sexual intercourse with her who had a passion for it. Thus I have resorted to religious practices, worldly pursuits and carnal pleasures at the proper time. Due to what defect in my queen am I not having a child? Vasiṣṭha, my preceptor, who knows the past and the future will alone tell me the defect due to which a son is not born to me.'

Devala said:

16b-26a. Thinking like this, the king, deciding to go to his preceptor's hermitage, entrusted Kośala with rich treasures to his ministers. Then having worshipped God, the creator of beings, the couple, desiring a son, proceeded to the preceptor's hermitage on an auspicious day. The couple, seated in a chariot,

having gone over the path, reached after some days the holy hermitage of the preceptor. There the sage received the guests that had come there after the offering made to all deities. It purified the sages in it and the guests also with the rising mass of smoke of the material offered into the fire. It was dull due to the (slow-moving) deer whose bellies were full due to the mass of shoots of dūrvās. In the hall of the hermitage the flock of female deer was entering from all sides. It was full of noise of groups of birds gathering on the trees which they had turned into their abodes. There were tigers and (other) beasts, that had given up their mutual hostility. The sound of the recitation of the Vedas made by great sages engaged there in muttering (hymns) and meditation, had ceased for a while. There the boys were engaged in sports during intermission of study. In it the couple saw Vasiṣṭha performing the rites. He was seated on a holy seat and was steady, and was waited upon by Arundhatī. He (i.e. Dilīpa) saluted the preceptor's feet, and his wife saluted the ladies of (the family of) him. The preceptor gave him a blessing, and Arundhatī gave her one. Preceptor Vasiṣṭha, the greatest among the adorable, honoured the guest with respectful offerings, and asked him like this:

Vasiṣṭha said:

26b-30. O greatest among kings, I hope everything is all right in your kingdom, in your family and with the people following their respective practices. O hero, I hope you have protected the earth righteously. (I hope) your treasury is growing like a righteous thought for good practices. O king, I hope your excellent villagers and citizens are not transgressing their limit like the oceans. I hope due to love, due to moving together and association, the couples in your cities act like Lakṣmī and Viṣṇu. O best king, I hope, the voluntary vows of your subjects are fruitful like the Haricandana[1] tree in heaven.

Devala said:

31-33. Having asked like this, that greatest sage, Vasiṣṭha, pre-eminent among sages, fed the king with eatables procured

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1. Haricandana: One of the five trees of Paradise. The five trees are: Mandāra, Pārijātaka, Santāna, Kalpa, and Haricandana.

through the power of his abstract meditation. That old Arundhatī, of a generous mind, and full of respect, fed the queen with various dishes of cooked food. The steady sage, having held the hand of the king who was fed and had saluted him and who was seated comfortably, again asked him.

Vasiṣṭha said:

34-46a. O king, what is the use of the kingdom of heaven to that king whose kingdom has the seven constituents,[1] in which the subjects are engaged in their duties, in which kinsmen and relatives are pleased, where the soldiers know the science of weapons and missiles, in which friends are obedient, where the enemies are subdued, where the minds (of men) are devoted to Kṛṣṇa's worship? O lord, the religious kings of the Ikṣvāku family, having produced sons, and having entrusted the kingdom to them, proceed to practise penance. You are young. You have not (as yet) seen the face of your son. Why have you, abandoning your kingdom like that, come here?

The king said:

O brāhmaṇa, with a desire for (going to) heaven, I, having abandoned my kingdom like that, have come to your hermitage to practise penance. O brāhmaṇa, you have told the truth that (kings) born in Ikṣvāku's family, entrusted their kingdom to their sons, and went to the penance-grove. As childhood has passed, so this youth that has come will also pass; and certainly old age will come. There is no doubt that a man meets death after old age. O brāhmaṇa, when I die, to whom will this kingdom, without a son's birth, go? Tell me that, O preceptor. Therefore, I who remain in the kingdom without a child, have no feeling of mineness for it, without it. O you my preceptor, you know the three objects of human life. O you treasure of penance, quickly tell me the defect after seeing it through meditation, due to which a son is not born to me. Having heard it, I shall adopt a remedy against it to obtain a child.

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1. Saptāṅga: the seven constituents of a kingdom: king, ministers, friend, treasury, people, forts, and army.

Devala said:

46b-47a. Having heard these words of the king, Vasiṣṭha, seeing through concentration the cause of the obstruction in (the birth of) a child, spoke:

Vasiṣṭha said:

47b-53a. Formerly, O king, you, having waited upon the chief of gods, and remembering this your young wife who had bathed (after her menstrual period) started for your home. O king, on the way of you who, being eager to have a child, were hurriedly going, stood under a divine tree the desire-yielding cow. You produced great anger in her by not saluting and not doing pious acts like saluting the dust of her venerable feet. With great anger she cursed you: "A son will not be born to you till you do not serve my progeny." You desiring a son, and therefore going quickly to give her (your semen after) menstruation, and thinking of that only, did not hear the curse nor did your charioteer hear it due to the noise caused by the axles. With this your young wife propitiate her young granddaughter, the cow Nandinī, along with her calf. She will give you a son.

Devala said:

53b-54. While Vasiṣṭha, the sage, was speaking like this that Nandinī, with her udders having (milk) flowing from them through affection, came there. Seeing her, the best sage Vasiṣṭha, with his heart delighted, saw her, and showing her to the king, again said to him:

Vasiṣṭha said:

55-57. O king, this (cow) of an auspicious name has come just when remembered. Therefore, know that the accomplishment of your object is near. There is no doubt that when you propitiate her by going after her in the forest and your young wife propitiates her in the hermitage, she will, through her favour, give you a son. O best king, O archer, graze her in such a way that no wild ferocious animal would attack her.

Devala said:

58. Then the ascetic (Vasiṣṭha) gave the king who talked

little and to the daughter-in-law a good hut to pass their night in. There the king with his mind controlled along with his wife passed the night, sleeping on the ground covered with grass.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED THREE

Dilīpa Obtains a Son by Propitiating Nandinī

Devala said:

1-19. Then in the morning, the king taking (with him) the cow Nandinī worshipped by the queen with flowers went to the forest. Like her shadow the king followed the divine (cow). He too ate roots etc. after she had eaten young grass etc. After she had sat in the shade of a tree, he sat there. He drank water after she had drunk. The king thus served the preceptor's desire-yielding cow by (offering her) soft grass, driving away flies and scratching her (body). Purifying the king's body with dust-particles raised by her hoofs, she returned to the hermitage in the evening. Nandinī, as it were, loaded with the great burden of the mission of the king, appeared to be going slowly bent by the great burden. The queen taking to her sandal, sacred rice grains, articles of food, incense etc. went forth to (greet) her near the harmitage in the evening. The queen after duly worshipping and repeatedly saluting her and having gone round her keeping her to her right, stood before her with the palms of her hands joined. She (i.e. the cow) remaining steady accepted that worship devoutly offered by the queen and went to the hermitage with the two. O vaiśya, when Dilīpa of a firm vow was thus propitiating her, twentyone days passed. Then, with a desire to know that king's devotion, she, of a fearless heart, entered Himālaya's cave containing young grass. A lion whose arrival was not noticed by the king observing the beauty of the Himālayan peaks, forcibly seized Nandinī. The cow, as it were, afflicted, wailed much with a piteous sound, (thus) producing pity in the heart of the king. Then hearing her wailing, the lord of the world withdrew his eyes from the peaks of Himālaya. The king seeing a

lion of sharp claws (seated) upon the cow with tears flowing on her face, was afflicted. Seeing her seized by the lion, the archer put his right hand (on his back) to take out an arrow from the quiver. The lord of the earth, taking out an arrow from the quiver, fixing the arrow on the string, fully drew the string to kill the lion. When the lion looked towards him, his entire body was paralysed. The king could not discharge the arrow. He, therefore, was amazed. Seeing the king like that, the lion, making him still more amazed, spoke in a human voice.

The lion said:

20-28. O king, I know you to be Dilīpa, born in the solar family. You too know me to be Śiva's attendant called Kumbhodara. O hero, this devadāru (tree) which is within the range of your sight is protected by Pārvatī of an affectionate heart like her (own) son. Once, O great king, the soft bark of this (tree) was very much torn by a wild elephant scratching his temples (against it). Noticing it like that, Pārvatī, full of pity, kept me, turning me into a lion, here, to protect it. And she said to me: "O Kumbhodara, listen. Living here you eat whichever animal would come here." Since then, O best king, I, obeying her order, obeyed by all gods, have been staying in this cave. You should not be amazed at your body being paralysed. On this Himālaya Mountain Śambhu's great Māyā prevails. You cannot strike me like another (ordinary) lion, as the lord (Śiva) mounts on Nandin after getting on my back. O hero, go back; protect this (your) body, the means of (accomplishing) all objects. This cow has come as my prey through destiny.

Devala said:

29. Hearing these words of him, along with the address as 'O hero', the king with his body paralysed replied to him:

The king said:

30-37. O lord of beasts, I salute Śiva, the cause of the creation, maintenance and destruction of the world, and Pārvatī, the mother of the world. O lord of beasts, as their servant you are respectable to me. Having heard the words which I (shall) speak,

direct me as to what I (should) do. You know, Vasiṣṭha, Brahmā's son, is our preceptor. This is his cow, Nandinī by name, accomplishing all objects. He has given (i.e entrusted) her to me to propitiate her for the birth of a child (to me). For a few days she has been properly propitiated by me. This mother of a young calf is seized by you in the mountain-cave. It is not possible for me to release her forcibly from (you), a servant of Śiva. How can I go to that sage without her? She is the granddaughter of the desire-yielding cow, fit to be served by the world. There is no other cow like this with which I shall please him. Therefore, release this best cow, and have me for your meal. I give you my body tarnished by infamy. (Having done) like this, there will not be the loss of the sage's religious rite, and you will also have your meal. I, giving up my life for the cow, shall reach an excellent position (i.e. salvation).

Devala said:

38-41a. O best merchant, when the lion, on hearing this, remained silent, the king, conversant with religious practices, lay, looking up, before him. On him who was expecting the very unbearable jump of the lion fell the shower of flowers dropped by best gods. Hearing the words, 'O son, get up', the king got up. He saw (there) the cow like (his) mother and not the lion. To him, who was amazed, Nandinī said:

Nandinī said:

41b-43. By means of the illusion in the form of the lion, I tested you. O king, due to the sage's power (even) Yama cannot think of seizing me; then what other animals can to do so? By offering your own body you were ready to protect me. Therefore, I am pleased with you. Ask for your desired boon.

The king said:

44-47. For (deities) like you there is nothing that is concealed in the (hearts of) beings. Therefore, O mother, you know it. Give it to me. Give me a son, continuing my family, born to the daughter of the king of Magadha. For pure ones like you, nothing is impossible.

Saying so the king with his eyes fixed stood before her in silence with his palms joined and expecting a reply from her.

Devala said:

Hearing these words of the king, Nandinī, accomplishing the objects of the manes, gods, sages, men and (other) beings said these words:

Nandinī said:

48-49a. From a cup made of leaves drink to your satisfaction my milk, O son. Ordered by the preceptor you will again drink the remaining in the hermitage. You will have a son, continuing your family and knowing (the use of) weapons and missiles.

Devala said:

49b. Thus addressed by that granddaughter of Surabhi, he politely said to her:

Dilīpa said:

50-53. O mother, I shall drink the remnant of your (milk) only after the completion of the rite. Having drunk the nectar of your favourable words I am satiated. I do not desire anything else like a cātaka desiring water from the row of clouds (only). Having served you I have had the source of everything as a dullard has due to learning honoured by all men. Even the curse given by your grandmother has become a boon for me. Wherefrom, except you, can I get a son? How could I have had your sight? It has led to a boon only. O mother, (deities) like you are to be propitiated. Nobody would desire poison from Mahādeva, giving the three goals of human life.

Devala said:

54-58. Hearing these words, the cow, being pleased, said: "Well (said), well (said)", and being very proud, went with him to the hermitage. As on the previous day, the king's wife worshipped her on that day also. The cow, as it were, the accomplishment of (the king's) object embodied, became pleased. The lotus-eyed (wife) of the king, seeing the pleased face of the king,

knew that the object for which an effort was made, has been accomplished. Then the couple, along with the cow to whom worship was duly offered, went to the blessed preceptor. The best sage, the treasure of suprasensual knowledge, seeing them with their lotus-like faces pleased, delighting them, said:

Vasiṣṭha said:

59-64. O king, I know the cow is pleased (with you), for the lustre on your face today appears to be unprecedented. Surabhi (the divine, desire-yielding cow) and the divine tree are known to fulfil desires (of beings). Having propitiated her (grand-)child, if the object is accomplished, what wonder is there? The tree gives every desired (object). She (i.e. Surabhi), the innocent one, even though remembered from a distance (gives the desired object). Then, what will she not give like the divine river, when devoutly served (by remaining) in her vicinity only? Through my (supernatural) knowledge, I knew the test given to you by her. O king, you too preserve your righteousness as I am favourably inclined to you, as devotion is to the supreme soul, Lakṣmī is pleased with Viṣṇu, or Pārvatī is attached to Śiva. Highly devoted to the worship of the cow, you with your wife, pass the night here. O great king, you who have completed the rite will go to your city tomorrow.

Devala said:

65-68. O merchant, he, having, along with his wife, thus propitiated the cow, having obtained his desired object, having furnished his chariot, secured his preceptor's order, and went home. After a few days Raghu was born to that Dilīpa. The race of Raghu is well-known on the earth by his (i.e. Raghu's) name. O merchant, that man who will read this account of Dilīpa, will obtain wealth, grains, sons on the earth. O excellent Śarabha, you too, along with this (your wife), worship according to your own way and quickly propitiate Gaurī. She will also give you a son, the chief of your family, endowed with virtues, and sinless.

Śivaśarman said:

69. The sage, having narrated this very charming and aus-

picious account of Dilīpa to Śarabha, and having instructed him as to the manner of worshipping Ambikā, took to his desired path.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED FOUR

The Story of a Merchant Śarabha and a Demon Vikaṭa

Śivaśarman said:

1-3. O Viṣṇuśarman, then Śarabha, taking the materials of worship went with his wife to the temple of Śrī Caṇḍikā. Having duly bathed there, they, full of devotion, worshipped Caṇḍikā with flowers, incense and lights with a desire for (getting) a son. Ambikā, devoutly propitiated by them for seven days, spoke with a clear mind (these) words directly addressed to them:

Pārvatī said:

4-7. O merchant, by means of your very firm devotion I am pleased with you. O good one, I shall give you a son for whom you are striving. Go to the Khāṇḍava (forest) of Indra. Do not delay. There is the excellent, very auspicious holy place called Indraprastha. There is the holy place, fulfilling all desires and fashioned by Bṛhaspati. With a desire to have a son, bath there. By means of a bath there, O dear one, you will have a son. O dear one, by bathing there, I obtained Skanda, the killer of foes.

Śivaśarman said:

8-14. Hearing these words of the goddess, my father, with his wife, came here and with a desire for (having) a son bathed (here). The intelligent one gave a hundred cows with household materials to brāhmaṇas after having gratified gods and the dead ancestors properly. After having stayed there with their minds controlled for seven nights, the couple with their lotus-like faces blooming due to having secured the desired object, went home. In the same month my mother conceived; and when, day by day,

nine months passed, I was born in the tenth auspicious month. O Viṣṇuśarman, the old account which I told you, was heard by me from my father when I was twenty years old. Once my father, seeing me capable of managing the household affairs and being detached from everything, handed over to me (the management of) the house. He, having his mind attached to Govinda and a religious nature, condemning addiction to objects of senses and repeatedly praising devotion for Viṣṇu, said to me:

The father said:

15-25. O you intelligent one, old age has come to me. My hair has grown grey. I shall resort to the lotus-like feet of Viṣṇu, that are resorted to by the good. That man whose mind becomes clear and quite steady due to service to him, is self-contented, and does not long for anything. Having no desire for pleasure and aversion to pain, and experiencing the natural (results of) good or bad deeds, he, at the end of them, casts his body and becomes unborn (i.e. is not reborn). Wealth gives excessive pleasure till the bliss of self-realization is not obtained. When it is obtained, it (i.e. the former) is small like buttermilk as contrasted with nectar. This Māyā of Viṣṇu is strong. It deludes a man. He like one intoxicated by liquor, does not know what is beneficial and what is not. The lord causes, as he wills, active worldly life or its absence, through knowledge or ignorance; for his sport is like that of a child. O dear one, when an act as told in the Veda is done by one desiring its fruit, it is great active worldly life. They (i.e. the acts) should be dedicated to the lord. As burnt seeds do not grow in spite of effort, similarly acts dedicated through desirelessness to the lord of the universe do not (fructify). Salvation is the destruction of (the fruits of) acts that give pleasure or pain. Bondage is their origin. This is the verdict of the holy texts. Therefore, I doing acts as told in the Vedas and not desiring their fruits and having devotion for Viṣṇu in my heart, am moving in (i.e. visiting) the holy places. Thus experiencing the (fruits of) acts that were commenced, and not censuring others, I shall destroy the disease due to (the life in) the world by drinking the medicine in the form of the company of the good.

Śivaśarman said:

26. O Viṣṇuśarman, listen accurately to what I said to my father after I had heard these words of him:

The merchant's son said:

27-33. The people are difficult to please; they will not give you any credit. (They will say:) He has gone leaving the bad family being dejected with it. These feet of Viṣṇu purify the three worlds. (Even) when remembered from a distance they remove sins. Why do you leave them? O father, even a sinful person who dies in Magadha, has his sins washed in Gaṅgā. He goes to heaven. Do not give up the auspicious (Gaṅgā), (since) sixty thousand sons of the noble Sagara, who were burnt by Kapila's anger, went to heaven due to her touch. O father, do not go elsewhere after abandoning her; that is a series (of steps) leading to heaven, that even brings about salvation, and is resorted to by those who desire salvation. Do not disregard Gaṅgā honoured by gods, (which is) in your vicinity. O glorious one, she, when resorted to, will give you what you desire. Even if lower animals, through ignorance, would die in her water, they would become Brahman. How do you abandon her?

Śivaśarman said:

34-47a. Hearing these words my father to whom sacred law was dear, being averse to all objects of senses, lived in the house. Everyday he thrice bathed in Gaṅgā, and always went to the house where a Purāṇa would be (read). O son, once listening to the greatness of Yamunā-tīrtha, the wise one heard about the greatness of this holy place. The religious merit of this holy place full of all holy places is a hundred times better than holy places like Avimukta, Haridvāra, Prayāga, Puṣkara, Ayodhyā, Dvārikā, Kāñcī, Mathurā and others. My father, having heard what the learned son had told him, went, unnoticed by all, to this holy place, after abandoning the house. My illustrious father, serving the feet of Viṣṇu like us came here with a desire for salvation. Bathing thrice (a day) at the Nigamodbodhaka Tīrtha he, the wise one, doing his rites and being desireless, lived at this best holy place—the abode of the unborn—for a few months. Once he had very severe fever. Due to the great pain

(caused) by the fever he, losing his consciousness, fainted. For a while the father remained in the condition of unconsciousness. When later he regained his consciousness he thought like this: 'Oh! misery has befallen me. My very intelligent, religious son, who would console me, with my body hot due to fever, is away. I have not atoned for the very fearful sin of illicit intercourse. What would be my fate? (If) my son will come I shall give him the wealth which I have hidden in my house and which even I have not seen.'

Śivaśarman said:

47b-51a. While he was thinking like this, a traveller, troubled by rain, afflicted by cold, and with his body trembling, entered the hut. Seeing him asleep, the traveller again went near him, and knowing him to be an ascetic saluted him with (i.e. by bending) his head, and said to him: "O sage, why are you sleeping? The evening has come. This sun is setting. This is not the time for sleeping for you." When the traveller had just uttered these words, Śarabha, my father, with his body hot with fever, somehow spoke to him:

Śarabha said:

51b-58a. O traveller, listen to the words which I am speaking to you. Listening to the course of my fate you do (what is proper), O good one. I am a merchant named Śarabha. My house is in Kānyakubja. Though prevented by my wife, friends and son I came here on hearing the greatness of this holy place told by my son. O good one, some months have passed after I came here. Now for the last three days I have been suffering from fever. My life had departed. Today it has come (back) again. O good one, some portion of my life still remains (to be passed). I have come (back) after having seen Yama's place, and due to my good fortune you have come here. O friend, take me to my house; I shall give you much wealth after reaching home. O you treasure of kindness, favour me. Dig a portion of the landhere and take my wealth.

Śivaśarman said:

58b-60a. Having heard this, the wicked-minded rustic, addic-

ted to sensuous pleasures and greedy of wealth, said to him: "I shall do as told by you." Speaking like this, and digging the wealth from that piece of land, the traveller placed it before Śarabha and said:

The traveller said:

60b-61. O chief of merchants, I have taken out this your wealth from the piece of land. Quickly give (some money) to me to bring a palanquin; having placed you, suffering from fever, in it, I shall take you to your place.

Śivaśarman said:

62-76. Thus addressed by him, he gave him three golden palas. He too took that money and went to the city of Lavaṇa. O son, having stayed there for a night, he, having paid a couple of palas, brought a palanquin with attendants and carriers. The wicked one took the two palas for himself only. Having put the excellent merchant, Śarabha, in the palanquin, the traveller, hastening the carriers, started for Kānyakubja. The traveller, repeatedly making him (i.e. giving him) who was oppressed with thirst, drink a small quantity of water collected from that holy place in a water-pot, proceeded. Then, on the way, they got to the bank of a lake to eat (food). Having bathed and eaten food, they hastily moved from that place. Having crossed some portion of the land, they were oppressed by thirst. (The traveller) drank the water from the water-pot and made Śarabha also drink it. Then a very fierce demon, Vikaṭa by name, moving in the solitary forest, saw them going. Seeing them, he, with his mouth open, and overcome by hunger, and causing the earth to tremble with the strokes (i.e. the plantings) of his feet, speedily ran (to them), and coming near them speedily, he seized the traveller and the carriers at their testicles and he, moving in the sky, whirled them. He dropped them who were dead due to being whirled only, on the ground. He ate their flesh and drank blood from their testicles. Thinking, 'Where will this man suffering from a disease go from my presence? I shall (first) eat him up, and then drink the water', that chief among the demons then threw water from the water-pot on his face. As soon as the water was thrown he had the recollection of his former birth. He turn-

ed away from killing that Śarabha. He also got the recollection of the sin committed by him in his former existence, due to which he obtained demonhood though he was born as a brāhmaṇa. The demon, having recollected his sin, and having got knowledge, quickly approached Śarabha (my father) and said to my father:

The demon said:

77-78. "O best man, who are you? And who are these men whom, I, a mean demon, of a fierce form. devoured? Of which excellent holy place is this water, due to whose power even a sinner like me had the recollection of my former existence?"

The merchant said:

79-86. O best demon, I am a merchant. My home is in Kānyakubja. Travelling to (various) holy places I came to Indraprastha. There I suffered from fever due to fate. O you having bad ways, then an idea to go home arose in me. Some traveller troubled by rain came there. I requested him to bring a palanquin and take me home. And this is that wise traveller who quickly brought a palanquin and having put me in it, had proceeded to my house. Now that traveller and the carriers of the palanquin have been eaten by you. Hear of which holy place this water is. In the Khāṇḍava Vana of Indra there is the excellent river Yamunā. On her bank is the best holy place called Hariprastha. The preceptor of gods lives there. The holy place accomplishes everything (and is called) Nigamodbodhaka, drinking the water of which you got the recollection. I have told you all this that you had asked me. O demon, I shall ask you something. Tell (i.e. answer) me quickly about it. Now (and) here you will recollect the deeds in your former existence. Tell me what sin you committed, due to which you became a demon.

The demon said:

87-100. Listen. I shall tell you everything. Formerly I was a brāhmaṇa (born) in the family of those proficient in the Vedas. I was wicked and sinful. While playing with dice everyday with those conversant with it, I lost much wealth, mine as well as of my father. My father having reported my act to the king,

formerly got me having no wealth, out of the house. I went to a village nearby. There was a friend, the best brāhmaṇa named Devaka. He, respecting me, allowed me to live comfortably in his house for a long time. When my friend had gone somewhere, I, afflicted by sexual urge, forcibly enjoyed his beautiful wife. At that moment only that very chaste lady, drinking strong poison, died. Seeing her (dead) I ran away at the dark night. I who was running (away) was arrested by the officers of the king. Saying, 'This is a thief', they cut off my head. Causing me to take up a body full of torment the servants of Yama threw me into the terrible Raurava hell by Yama's order. Having experienced severe torture there for sixty thousand years, I obtained demonhood due to that sin only. O chief of merchants, I have passed a hundred years as a demon. I (shall) tell (you) that remedy due to which I (shall) get salvation. O good one, you gave me religious merit. I shall speak (i.e. tell) it. Listen carefully to that by which this water of the excellent holy place got into my mouth. O merchant, in that same existence I observed the vow of Viṣṇu's day (i.e. Ekādaśī) due to company and not (my) desire, and kept awake at night. Having bathed on the Dvādaśī-day I got ready to eat also. (At that time) some devotee of Viṣṇu, having Viṣṇu's form, came to my house. Seeing him I got angry and uttered abusive words: "O hypocrite, O wicked one, why are you going amidst the ladies?"

101-109. When, addressed by me, the wise one, who looked equally upon respect or disrespect, silently went out of my house, my loyal wife, coming towards him, fell at his feet and brought the good man to the house. Though insulted by me, the noble one did not get angry. He was delighted when honoured by her, since he was one to whom enemies and friends were alike. She, having seated him on a seat (said to me): "O lord of my life, make him enjoy (i.e. offer him) food. Conquer the three worlds." Thus addressed by the chaste one, I, with a gloomy face, spoke to the noble-hearted one, of a pleasing face, "(Please) get up, pacify your hunger." Speaking like this, I, prompted by my slender-waisted (wife), again seated him on a seat and washed his feet. To the judicious one I offered a plate full of food. My good wife gave (i.e. poured) water on his hand. I was repeatedly prompted by her. The virtuous one, free from perturbation, went

at will, muttering. 'Hare Rāma, Hare Kṛṣṇa.' O merchant, due to this religious merit which I, prompted by my wife, did in the previous existence, this water of the holy place was brought to me.

Śivaśarman said:

110. O Viṣṇuśarman, when the demon got up after saying these words, the traveller and the carriers, having divine bodies, spoke in the sky:

The traveller and the carriers said:

111-115. O chief merchant, O good one, though we met with death immaturely, we obtained godhead after drinking this water due to your favour. O chief of merchants, since we went with you through greed of wealth, our desire for wealth had not left (us) even at the time of death. By the power of the water of this best holy place in our belly, we secured at death the friendship of the lord of wealth. O lord, we salute you; we are going to the city of the lord of wealth in aeroplanes which are brought by his attendants, which are decorated with various jewels. Go to the holy place Nigamodbodhaka. Do not delay. O good one, along with you quickly emancipate him also.

Śivaśarman said:

116-117a. O dear one, speaking like this, they went, all around, to the northern direction, producing sound in the sky and on the earth with small bells of the aeroplanes. Then my father, the merchant, spoke to the demon:

Śarabha said:

117b-118. Get up. Quickly take me to the holy place Nigamodbodhaka. I, suffering from fever, cannot go there on foot. There is none else except you, who (would) take me to that holy place.

Śivaśarman said:

119-122. The demon, comforting the merchant with the words 'All right' put him on his shoulder, and speedily went to that purifying holy place. Both, the chief merchant and the demon, just bathing at the best of all holy places, stayed there. I having heard about the great agony of my father, and urged by

my mother (to go to him) moved from my house. Having come here, I saw him, suffering from severe fever. I saluted him with (i.e. by bending my) head. He blessed me and said:

Śarabha said:

123-125. O dear one, why have you come here along a distant (i.e. long) path? My friend, a demon by name Vikaṭa, has come here, and (is) staying here doing his own rites. Get up, and fall at his feet (i.e. prostrate before him) like a staff. You should not be afraid of him who has given up harmful acts. Now, having reached this holy place, he stays near me.

Śivaśarman said:

126-127. Thus told by my father, that noble Śarabha, I got up and fell at his feet (prostrating myself) like a staff. He raised me (seizing me) with my arms, and closely embracing me and giving me a blessing said, "Welcome to you, O my friend's son."

The demon said:

128-129. O dear one, you are fortunate that you have come here on hearing your father's very severe suffering due to fever. Performing the rite with water mixed with sesamum-seeds, you will be free from the debt of your dead ancestors. Having bathed perform your rites; (thereby) you will remember your former existence.

Śivaśarman said:

130-143. O dear one, thus told by him, I, remembering the auspicious and inauspicious acts of the former existence, entered the holy place having excellent water. Having duly bathed here, I came near my father. I asked him the account of the demon: "Why has he become religious-minded?" Having heard the account of the demon, the carriers and the traveller, I praised this best holy place. Thinking, 'I shall go home when my father will be free from the disease', I stayed there for ten days. Within (those) ten days, while I watched (i.e. before me) the death of my father occurred in the (half) quantity of the water of this best holy place. Then, Viṣṇu, having a body like a fresh cloud, and holding Lakṣmī close to his bosom, came after having mounted

Garuḍa. He had put on yellow garments; had four arms; his lotus-like eyes were tawny. He was served by the divine Brahmā and others along with Andhakārin, and by the kinnaras singing the hosts of his virtues. He was being praised on all sides by Hāhā, Hūhū and others. Giving my father identity with his own form, and putting him on Garuḍa, and surrounded by Brahmā and others, Viṣṇu went up to heaven. Seeing my father's sameness of form with Viṣṇu, I thought, when, at that time, there sprang the truth in my heart: 'It is the greatness of this crest-jewel of holy places that in half of its water a being that is dead becomes four-armed. I shall rightly not at all leave this best holy place having a strong efficacy urged by thirst for the disease in the form of wealth. I shall stay in this hut of my father till (I get) freedom from the (fruits of) acts that have been commenced on the earth.' Having thought like this and performed proper rites (in honour) of my father, I stayed (there) with a desire for salvation along with the demon.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED FIVE

The Efficacy of Nigamabodha

Śivaśarman said:

1-10. Once that best demon, having seen a milch cow plunged into mud, entered it to take her up. 'There is a great religious merit in (i.e. due to) protecting a cow. The protector would go to heaven.' He who was thinking like this was seized by a crocodile (literally, a water-elephant). He was taken down into the water. With his belly full of water, and with his body pressed by him, he died instantly. He resorted to a divine form; an aeroplane with an attendant was brought near him sent by gods led by Indra. I asked the chief of the demons, going (to heaven) after having died here in this great holy place, very difficult to be reached, and giving salvation, "O intelligent and divine one, how did you reach heaven?" Thus addressed, he said, "O innocent one, I longed for it." When that meritorious one had gone to

heaven, the place of the meritorious ones, I, remaining alone, was taken to Viṣṇu, the good resort. With a concentrated mind, I, while going, standing, sleeping, keeping awake, bathing, constantly meditated upon that lotus-eyed one only. "O Viṣṇu, I have sought lhe shelter of your lotus-like feet. I have no longing for the position of Brahmā, Śiva or Indra." O dear one, making my mind free from the (longing for) objects of senses, and soliciting that Puruṣottama (i.e. Viṣṇu) only, I lived at this great holy place.

Viṣṇuśarman said:

11-14. When, while staying at this great holy place, you died, then how did you get a birth again? This is my doubt. The traveller and the carriers, on their having ignored the restriction (laid down) at this holy place due to greed for money, met with death from the demon (and) went to heaven on drinking the water of this great holy place. So also the demon meeting with, at his will, death from the crocodile, went to heaven while you were looking on (i.e. in your presence). There is no (re)birth (for a man whose) death takes place there.

Nārada said:

15. O Śibi, having heard the auspicious words of his son, Śivaśarman told him the former account, the cause of his birth.

Śivaśarman said:

16-19. O Viṣṇuśarman, listen to this cause of my birth. I am telling it to you. Having heard it, be free from doubts. Once when I had resorted to meditation while worshipping Viṣṇu, Durvāsas, irascible by nature, came to my hermitage. Not aware of his having arrived (there), I, intent upon meditation on Viṣṇu, remained in that condition recollecting (Viṣṇu's) name for a long time. The sage, standing for a while, full of anger and with his eyes red, spoke loudly to himself these (words):

Durvāsas said:

20-25. Oh! I, Atri's son, born from the womb of Anasūyā, a portion of Śiva, am thus excessively neglected by this human

being: This wicked man even ignores me who caused Indra to fall from the kingdom of the three worlds! Who are you that are not afraid of me who am like the destructive fire at the end of the world, since I have the greatest worth barring (that of) the three gods? How is it that that deity whom he is meditating upon, does not advise him that Yama has come in an embodied form? Indeed he is meditating upon Viṣṇu, the lord of the world, being satisfied with the nectar of meditation upon whom he does not have the knowledge of his surroundings. Let him meditate upon Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Śiva, or any other (deity). He should be punished by me by all means. He has disregarded me.

Śivaśarman said:

26-45. Thinking like this, he roused me, and with his eyes red due to anger, cursed me who had become conscious. "How will that desire, which you, ignoring me, had in your mind at the time of meditation, come true at all?" O dear one, when, after having spoken like this, the sage born of Atri, moved (to go), I dreaded with fear, seized his feet, and said like this: "O best sage, forgive me; give up your anger. (People) like me do not properly know the deeds of (sages) like you. Now you have given a fearful curse to me who am innocent. Favour me who am polite. Show favour for the end of (i.e. ending) your curse." Thus addressed, Durvāsas, giving up his anger, became cool. O darling, is it not proper, since he is Śiva (himself)? The wise one said to me: "You, being the best brāhmaṇa, will meet with death here only, and will not be reborn." Having thus favoured me that Śiva (i.e. Durvāsas) left, after staying there that day and being honoured by me with a hospitable reception. I, having thought that the sage's words would not be untrue, and repenting in my mind, went home: 'Oh! to me, having my hermitage in a holy place, and constantly meditating upon (Viṣṇu) the sight of Lakṣmī's lord has become difficult to have in this existence, like that of a cloud to a cātaka in Caitra and Vaiśākha, causing heat? Wherefrom has this one, causing obstacle in my course to Vaikuṇṭha come like a cloud (coming in the way) of a man who has set out (on a journey)? It is not the fault of the sage. It is indeed the desire of that Viṣṇu only. Having well appeared before me, he has given me another (i.e. a new) existence. I, scared

of the worldly existence, should seize the lotus-like feet of Viṣṇu, as a traveller heated by the heat of summer (takes to) the shade of a tree. What is the use of the transient wealth, children, wife and other relatives to me who am muttering 'Govinda, Paramānanda (the highest joy), Rāma.' Not censuring other acts, and resorting to Viṣṇu, and remaining like a neutral person among the members of my family, I shall enjoy what is destined.' O dear one, thnking like this, I, after having bathed in the water sacred to Viṣṇu, came home after a few days. I told my mother and relatives about the death of my father. Hearing (the news) they lamented; they did not know that this (worldly existence) is transitory. Having no longing for the worlds like Satya, I remained in the house and died on the bank of Gaṅgā, resorted to by the sages. Due to the curse of the sage Durvāsas, I was born in the family of Viṣṇu's devotees. Having died at this holy place, I shall reach Viṣṇu's feet.

Nārada said:

46-51. O noble one, thus the two best brāhmaṇas talking to each other about the sins committed by them in their former existence, and thinking about Viṣṇu's foliage-like feet, remained at the holy place fashioned by the preceptor of gods. Thinking about and remembering Viṣṇu, of lotus-like eyes, of four arms, having a body dark blue like a cloud, and shining with his weapons and ornaments, they got absorption into Viṣṇu. The story of this excellent holy place which is the one called Indraprastha has been told. O Śibi, listen to its fruit. A man obtains the same fruit by devoutly listening to it as is obtained by him on bathing in Gaṅgā or by giving away his daughter (in marriage). There is no doubt that that fruit which is produced on the earth at the birth of a son, or by a bath in the water of Godāvarī when Jupiter is in the Zodiacal sign of Leo, is obtained by listening to it. There is no other holy place giving all objects than this best holy place, by dying at which even lower animals become four-armed (ones).

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED SIX

A Woman Should Never Desert Her Husband

Saubhari said:

1. That religious king, the wealthy Śibi, having heard those words of the sage Nārada, was pleased in his mind, and (thus) spoke to the best one:

Śibi said:

2-3. O sage, you have properly described the greatness of this excellent holy place Nigamodbodhaka. I have heard it; that removes sins. O sage, there are hundreds of holy places in this Indraprastha. Tell me the greatness of some other holy place, if there is any.

Nārada said:

4-17. O king, I shall tell you what formerly took place in this Dvārakā which is situated within Indraprastha. Listen to it from me. In Kāmpilya there was a certain brāhmaṇa, Cupid embodied as it were. He attracted the hearts of all women with his excellent amorous actions. He was skilled in the science of music. His voice was sweet like that of a cuckoo. Once, that very intelligent one, holding a lute in his hand, repeatedly playing upon it, singing, without an equal, with voice sweet like that of a cukoo, moved in the city. Having heard the sound of his song, full of melody and protracted tones, the wives of citizens abandoned their domestic work and went (to him). Fascinated by his handsome form, they could not bear the force of lust. Hearing the song actually they were disturbed. What other self-controlled and wise person than the two (viz. Brahmā and Śiva) is able to conquer Cupid who created a longing for Sarasvatī in the mind of Brahmā, or who made half of Śiva's body to be given to Pārvatī? And women are fickle by nature. Even the chaste ones were unable to put up with the excitement caused by Cupid. What could be said, O king? Cupid iṣ difficult to be conquered in the world. They went everywhere he, singing with his throat and lute and fascinating with his tone, went. Their husbands, sons, brothers and fathers came there, and threatening them,

took them (back) to their own homes, O king. When they again looking for him, approached him, the citizens told the account to their king. The king too called the best brāhmaṇa and asked him in private: "O best brāhmaṇa, tell me by means of which charm you fascinated the women in the city. I shall give you much wealth. Othewise I shall drive you out of my kingdom. There is no doubt about it."

Nārada said:

18. Hearing these words of the king, the best brāhmaṇa, the ocean of handsomeness and virtues, spoke to him true words.

The Brāhmaṇa said:

19-21. O king, I, a beggar, have neither a charm nor a herb; but all the women in your city have no control over their senses. O king, the women in your city cannot put up with the force of lust on seeing my handsome form and hearing the sound of my songs. O great king, what can I do? O lord, what is my fault? The order of the king, like (the fruits of) former acts, can never be resisted.

Nārada said:

22. O king Uśīnara-Śibi, when the brāhmaṇa was telling like this all citizents, coming together, spoke thus to the king:

The citizens said:

23-27. O king, this brāhmaṇa has fascinated the wives of the citizens. They do not remain in their houses. They cannot be stopped by us. O lord, if this one who infatuates the women lives in the city, then today (only) we shall go to other countries. Our bull-god of the nature of havya and kavya (oblations to gods and dead ancestors) has gone(?). They have started going after him like a cow from the field of sinners. O lord of men, we, abandoned by glory, have no other shelter to seek. They will follow him as the female elephants follow their lord. How can Lakṣmī (wealth) remain in a vacant house? Since these three, viz. piety, worldly riches and house, depend upon the wife, one that depends upon

the wife's piety and wealth cannot remain, when the two are lost.

Nārada said:

28. When the citizens were speaking like this, their wives came to the king, sat there, and thus spoke to one another:

The wives of the citizens said:

29-31a. Our minds open excessively on seeing this brāhmaṇa of a charming form as lotuses in the water do on seeing the lord of the day and they close in his absence as the white lotuses close without the moon: come, together we shall seize (and take) him before the king. He is not fit to be killed, nor are we. What will the king do?

Nārada said:

31b-33. Saying so, they hurriedly seized the best brāhmaṇa, when their own husbands were watching and in front of the king himself; and they said to him: "O lord of our minds, come to our house, and quickly pacify (the agony) tormenting our hearts. Today we cannot remain (i.e. live) without you." Hearing these words of them, the brāhmaṇa replied:

The brāhmaṇa said:

34-40. I am your son; you are my mothers. Leaving your houses, why are you wandering? Propitiate your own lords, since, when the husbands are propitiated, wives certainly (enjoy) the two worlds, and Viṣṇu, the lord of gods, is pleased. (And) when he is pleased, what is difficult to be obtained? That woman who, forsaking her own husband, resorts to another (man) with a desire for enjoyment, invites censure and goes to a fearful hell. She, the deceiver of her husband, lives there till the end of the kalpa. Again having moved out of it, she reaches the state of an inanimate object. Even from there, she obtains beasthood for many existences. Then freed from that (stock) she is born as a crippled one. Knowing the sinful course to be like this, turn away from Cupid. Otherwise at the end (i.e. fall) of your body, you will go to a very fearful hell. You will not have the pleasure

that you desire to get from me. It is your sin, since it is a fall of a human being.

Nārada said:

41-43. Having heard his words like these, and seeing the faces of their husbands, they hung down their faces through shame like creepers struck by a (stormy) wind. The very terrible fire of lust of the women in the city went out due to the cold water in the form of the words of the chap. O king, all of them, condemning Cupid as one that fascinates even gods like Brahmā, Indra, got up, and walked (away).

The women said:

44-52. Fie upon this, committing sinful acts, an axe to the wood in the form of good character! He who has struck Cupid for the happiness of passionate beautiful women, is blessed. What should we say to Rukmiṇī, venerable to the world, who carried in her womb this Rāhu, named Pradyumna, eating the Moon of the good character of women? If that mean god comes within the range of our sight again, we shall throw him into the fire of the eye of the lord (Śiva) by meditating upon him. He, the sinful one, whom Viṣṇu, delighted in self, created, made Viṣṇu dear to (or the lover of) sixteen thousand women. Then what can be said about us?

Having thus censured that Cupid, the women praised that best brāhmaṇa who preserved his own character and that of them also, O king. 'Blessed is that mother of this (best brāhmaṇa) who gave, birth to this excellent brāhmaṇa who vanquished Cupid and preserved the virtue of others! Fie upon us who were laughed at by the king's men, who were vanquished by Cupid, and by whom great sin was committed through speech and mind!' All the women who were thus thinking, who were of the same view, being admonished by the brāhmaṇa's words, went to their respective houses. Then king Kāmpilya also, having honoured that brāhmaṇa with garments and ornaments, sent him to the house of that good man.

53-63. As time went on, the powerful lord of Kārūṣa besieged lord of Kāmpilya and his city with armies (i.e. a large army). A great war took place between the two. He (i.e. Kārūṣa king)

got him killed. He plundered the entire city and the brave ones were killed everywhere. Those women eating (i.e. drinking) Kālakūṭa (poison) died. They had not made any atonement for that sin. Due to that sin all those were born as demonesses with huge bodies and causing fear in the city of the demon called Bhīṣaṇa. All the women in the city were killed by Hanūmat, occupying the banner of the chariot of Viṣṇu relishing sacrifices. The same were again born as demonesses on the path to Maru. They were oppressed by hunger and thirst, and caused fear at their sight. Thus due to the sin committed by means of speech and mind, they obtained two existences, mixed with (i.e. along with) the existence as demonesses. Due to their sin the two cities along with their kings were destroyed. Therefore, O lord, women, fearing sin, should never resort to another lover even through speech or mind. Women desiring salvation should not desert their husband even though he is diseased, dull, poor or blind. O Śibi, I have told you in great detail about the sin produced through devotion to another lover by means of speech or mind, so also the fruit of it obtained by these (women). By the drops (of water) of the pious Dvārakā, seen by those going to Indraprastha, falling on their bodies, the women in the city reached heaven after abandoning the severe condition of corpse-eaters, which they had reached due to their having resorted to another lover, and obtained the form of divine ladies delighting gods.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED SEVEN

The Story of Vimala

Saubhari said:

1. O son of Dharma, having heard these words of that noble Nārada, king Śibi politely spoke these (words):

Śibi said:

2. O best sage, how did those demonesses, moving on the path to Maru, get the water from this Dvārakā?

Nārada said:

3-9. O king, listen to the story, pure and destroying sin, of a brāhmaṇa named Vimala, living in the valley of the Himālaya (mountain). In the Himālayan valley lived a brāhmaṇa by name Vimala. He honoured gods, sages, his dead ancestors, and guests. He was engrossed in worshipping Viṣṇu's feet. He knew the Vedas, the Vedāṅgas and religious practices. His mind was (devoted to) listening to the Purāṇa containing the hosts of Viṣṇu's virtues. In his old age a son was born to him due to Viṣṇu's grace. The father then named him Haridatta (literally, given by Viṣṇu). He duly performed his (sacraments like) shaving etc. Haridatta received (the knowledge of) the Vedas from his teacher. Having duly studied the Vedas, having paid the fee of the teacher, he, being detached, took to renunciation, (having) completely (dropped) the two stages (viz. the second and the third) of human life. On coming to know that act of him, his mother who loved her son, bathing (i.e. making wet) her pair of breasts with tears due to separation from her son, wept.

The mother said:

10-16. O dear one, like a bee abandoning coarse grass, where are you going, leaving me who am helpless, and your father stricken with old age? Due to service of the feet of Viṣṇu, I got you in my old age. You have resorted to his feet for salvation after having abandoned me. O dear one, I was certainly a fool, since having propitiated that eternal Viṣṇu I longed for you, the unsteady one, for getting happiness. O child, you are intelligent since you are resorting to Viṣṇu, the all-in-all. You too are looking upon this transient world as permanent. What should I do? Where should I go? Māyā cuts off my understanding, as a strong person having a weapon cuts off a plantain tree producing good fruits (right) from its roots. Blessed was king Daśaratha who died due to agony (caused by separation) from Rāma. Fie upon me who am (still) sustaining my life (even) after separation from my son! Come, appear before me, emancipate me. O dear one, O ocean of virtues, speak to your father words consisting of (the words from) the Vedas.

Nārada said:

17-20a. Weeping like this, O king, the mother fell on the ground like a digit of the moon due to its being cut off (from other digits) given to Rāhu. O best king, the brāhmaṇa sage came there. Seeing her fallen on the ground, he said: "What is this? Why has she, with her hair dishevelled and garments and ornaments disordered, fallen on the ground? Is Haridatta well?" All those her friends said to that Vimala, O king:

The friends said:

20b-21. Your son, Haridatta, having studied the Vedas, having paid the teacher's fee, and being highly devoted to Viṣṇu, has renounced the world. Due to the grief caused by separation from him she has fallen on the ground.

Nārada said:

22. Having heard these words of them, the very wise Vimala roused his wife with this nectar of his words.

Vimala said:

23-26. O (my) wife, get up. Listen to the words spoken by me. Why have you fallen down and are dejected? Your son who, knowing this (world to be) transient, has resorted to Viṣṇu's foliage-like feet, is blessed. You too, his mother, whose son has served the feet of Viṣṇu, are blessed. He will also undoubtedly emancipate me, (our) family, and men born in our family, O auspicious one. What a lot of difference is there between this unsteady world, and the service of Viṣṇu's feet, giving an eternal world! Thinking like this kings like Bharata resorted to Viṣṇu. So (has) your son (done), O chaste one. Unless a wise man, free from lust, resorts to the foliage-like feet of Viṣṇu, in every existence (of him) his wife, wealth, house, body, relatives cause grief to him.

Nārada said:

27. Thus admonished by him, the wise one, she got up from the ground, and with a piteous voice spoke to her husband:

The wife said:

28-31. O darling, I understand all that you have said well. I am very much tormented since I do not see a leader for our family. What is the use of service to Viṣṇu, when there is the great holy place in the form of a son? Even if we meet with death in our house only, we shall have (the fruit of) both the worlds then (i.e. when we have a son). Men indeed should try to beget a good son; since sons emancipate their ancestors from the ocean of the mundane existence. O you very intelligent one, if you desire a son, the foremost in the family, then, with a desire to have a son, resort to the creator and supporter of all beings.

Nārada said:

32-36. Hearing these words of her Vimala, the brāhmaṇa, said: "With a desire to have a son, I shall go to Brahmakṣetra Prayāga." Saying so, the brāhmaṇa set out and went to Hari-dvāra. Having duly bathed there, he then went to Indraprastha after a few days. O brave one, having bathed there (at the holy place) giving (whatever is desired) to everyone that solicits, in the evening, and having eaten (food) he slept at night on the bank of Yamunā. Near that Vimala sleeping at night, the lord of gods along with all holy places quickly came after having mounted on a swan. Having come he raised Vimala, desiring a son; and the best got spoke sweet words.

Brahmā said:

37-43. I know the desire hidden in your mind. Since there is no way to fulfil it, listen to the reason. Once all gods, led by me and Śiva, gathered on the peak of Meru, and praised Viṣṇu for success. Being praised by gods like me lord Viṣṇu was pleased then, and said: "Choose (a boon)." Thus addressed by Viṣṇu, all gods, having received (from him) a boon as desired, went to their respective houses. I said: "O lord of gods, give me an excellent boon. May my holy place, Prayāga, give all the desired objects. May another holy place of me at Indraprastha be a hundredfold (meritorious). O sinless one, I have properly chosen it from you." Having heard these words of me, the lord then said to me: "Let it be so," and again spoke (certain) words. Listen to (those) words.

The lord said:

44-56a. In Indra's Khāṇḍava forest there is an auspicious holy place on the bank of Yamunā, called Indraprastha. Those who die there are equal to me. O Brahman, my own city of Dvārakā is a hundredfold more meritorious than when formerly it was at the shore of the ocean. A man who, having ignored it, resorts to another holy place, does not obtain the fruit of (a visit to) the holy place. This statement is not false. A man would obtain the merit said to be accruing from all holy places. The city of Dvārakā preserves another illusory holy place. He who, having bathed at other holy places, and having performed various rites, will come here, will certainly get the fruit of those holy places.

O best brāhmaṇa, having spoken these words, Viṣṇu disappeared. I too went to my world situated below Vaikuṇṭha. Kāśī is said to be a hundredfold more meritorious than Prayāga, my holy place. Similarly the hilly place Nigamodbodhaka is a hundredfold more meritorious than Kāśī. This group of seven holy places is said to have the fruit equal to the three. O brāhmaṇa, to him who goes to Prayāga without ignoring these three, I give his desired objects. Not otherwise. Some sages say that the seven, Ayodhyā etc., are equal in merit. Indraprastha is said to be hundredfold superior to those. O brāhmaṇa, having come to that holy place Śrī Dvārakā, which gives all the desired fruits, bathe there with the desire for a son. When the hundred names are uttered, unlimited religious merit accrues from them. This holy place will give you a son, the foremost in your family; and due to your bathing here, Viṣṇu will be pleased.

Nārada said:

56b-58. Speaking like this, Brahmā, the lord of the chief of gods, vanished. Vimala also then bathed, and offered oblations to gods etc. Thus said the pious one: "O Dvārakā, dear to Kṛṣṇa, give me a son, your devotee. Salutation to you." When the brāhmaṇa spoke like this, there was (heard) a divine voice.

The divine voice said:

59-60a. Due to the favour of this holy place, the crest-jewel

of all holy places, you will have a son, knowing the truth of religious practices and continuing your family. Go home; do not delay. The bath is well done.

Nārada said:

60b-69. Having heard that (divine) voice, he, trusting in the birth of a son (i.e. trusting he will have a son), took water of Dvārakā in a water-pot, and left (the place). On the way he met his friend living on the Malaya mountain. He was going (back) home after having visited all holy places. He told him all the account consisting of his dialogue with Brahmā. He too was amazed on hearing what had taken place at the holy place of Dvārakā. The pious one said: "O friend, listen to my words. I desire to visit all those holy places that are fashioned in Bhārata. O friend, take me to that holy place, granting all desired objects and show it to me. On the earth those friends who oblige their friends are excellent. In the world none is like them—(even) the father, the mother, or the son. All relatives desert a poor man. But friends, afflicted by his grief, do not leave the friend. A friend emancipates his friends plunged into the ocean of mundane existence. Having taught me the devotion to Viṣṇu, capable of destroying existences, you have become my best friend. O oblige me. O brāhmaṇa, show me the best holy place called Dvārakā."

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED EIGHT

The Greatness of Dvārakā

Nārada said:

1. Taking the brāhmaṇa (with him) Vimala came here to Dvārakā. And the two wise ones with a desire for devotion for Viṣṇu bathed there. In the sky there was again heard the divine voice, deep like that of clouds.

The divine voice said:

2. Listen, O best brāhmaṇas, this is Viṣṇu's holy place. You

will have, due to the grace of this holy place, devotion for Viṣṇu, due to which people abandon the strong infatuation due to Māyā.

Nārada said:

3-4. The two best brāhmaṇas having heard the incorporeal speech, said to each other: "This is Viṣṇu's favour." The two, having duly bathed there and obtained great devotion for Viṣṇu, saluting him and talking to each other walked.

The brāhmaṇas said:

5-7a. As we two, walking on the path came in contact with each other, as on the earth contact with a house and wife etc. takes place, so the future separation of us, being on the way, is (but) proper. So is (the contact and separation from) the wife, son etc. being in the mouth of tiger in the form of Death. That man who realising the contact with wife and sons to be transient, would ever resort to and worship Viṣṇu, is blessed.

Nārada said:

7b-11a. "(Please) remember me. I am your servant, resorting to your feet. You may send me a message." Saying like this, they went home. O king, listen, how that friend of Vimala, going along the path, brought about the liberation of the demonesses. The brāhmaṇa, while going, reached that place void of water, where the demonesses scorched by sins stood oppressed by hunger and thirst. Then they, seeing from a distance that brāhmaṇa with a pot containing water in his hand, said to one another:

The demonesses said:

11b-13a. Some traveller, holding a pot of water in his hand is coming. Our hunger and thiist will be at least partially satisfied. We shall eat him up and drink the water in the pot in his hand. We are oppressed by hunger and thirst for a hundred years.

Nārada said:

13b-21. One said: "Having first eaten his hot liver, then having drunk his blood, I shall gain life." The other said: "How

much material does he have, O Gajānanā? Even for me, Vyāghrānanā, it is not seen to be enough for drinking." Another one called Rathacakrā, (said): "Hear my words. From one I shall fashion an ear-ring, and a girdle from (other) intestine."Another one said: "I, skilled in gambling, will play dice in the gambling hall with his sixteen teeth, made black from one side." All of them, thus speaking among themselves, ran to the brāhmaṇa, with their mouths opened, tongues lolling and bright great arms. Seeing them coming, the brāhmaṇa was overcome by fear. O king, he protected himself all round, as told in the Vedas. The demonesses of fierce valour having come (to him), stood away from him. O king, they were repelled by his lustre and hymns. And they said: "Tell us, who are you? Wherefrom have you come? Seeing you our mind is delighted. O brāhmaṇa, what will be the fruit of touching your feet? Therefore, place your lotus-like feet on our heads."

Nārada said:

22a. Hearing their words Haridattaja (Haridatta's son?) said:

The brāhmaṇa said:

22b-23. I am a brāhmaṇa who has come after visiting holy places. Now I am going to Puṣkara. What do you desire? Since, if I am able to give it, I shall do so.

The demonesses said:

24. O brāhmaṇa, tell us in which holy places you bathed. All those are meritorious. Liberate us from this bad existence, giving terrible agony due to great hunger and thirst.

The brāhmaṇa said:

25-38. From my hermitage I went first to Haripura, Avantī. From there I went to Dvārakā. Having bathed in the water of Somodbhavā, I went to the holy place Prabhāsa situated on the shore of the sea. Then I bathed at the highly purifying Setunibandha. From there I came to the very holy Kiṣkindhā where Rāma had killed Vālin, the lord of the host of monkeys. From there I came to the Sarasvatī temple situated on the bank of Narmadā where Sarasvatī, served by all, dwells. Then I reached

Veṇī, saluted her and saw the two cities Śivakāñcī and Viṣṇukāñcī in the southern part of India, due to having died where a man becomes Śiva and Viṣṇu. From there I reached Utkala where lord Viṣṇu, actually giving the four ends of human life and the desired objects to his devotees dwells. Having duly worshipped him, and eaten the eatables offered to him, I went to Gaṅgā-sāgara which was his favour only. Then having duly gratified gods, sages and (my) dead ancestors, I came to that place where Gaṅgā had a hundred faces (i.e. flew in a hundred courses). Then having gone to Gayā and having duly offered piṇḍa, endowed with Tulasī blossoms, sandal and water to the dead ancestors, I came to Kośala, to Śarayū which by means of her touch cloudy due to the water, had purified all people. There is a holy place called Gopratāra difficult to be reached (even) by gods. O demonesses, there I did the acts like bathing etc. From there I reached Kāśī, the capital of the lord of Umā. Having saluted god Viśveśvara, so also Bindumādhava, I devoutly bathed in the Jñānavāpī at Maṇikarṇikā. Having stayed there for three nights, I again came to Prayāga where actually Brahmā (lives) on the fourteenth day of the bright half of Pauṣa.

39-49. At a dawn of Māgha, having bathed there, again from there I came to Naimiṣa on the bank of Gomatī, where all holy places, with their enchantment dwell. From there I reached Mathurā where there is the holy place called Viśrānti. Near it is a holy, excellent pool called Asikuṇḍa. There very holy Yamunā giving everything and having the holy places of Kṛṣṇagaṅgā, Dhruvā, Krūrakeśī, Kālī exists. On both her banks are forests shining with splendour and producing all holy places. Having bathed in them and drunk (their water) a man is not born again. From there I came to the holy, excellent city of Hastināpura. There is the best river Gaṅgā that rose from lotus-like feet of Viṣṇu. Then coming to the place of Nārāyaṇa situated in the Himālayan region and seeing Mādhava (there), I came to Kedāra. Having worshipped Viśveśa (there) and having drunk the water of Haṁsā (lake), I came to the very holy Haridvāra, on the bank of Gaṅgā. Having bathed there and having gratified gods, sages and (my) dead ancestors, I came to Kurukṣetra where there is Prācī Sarasvatī. There too, I with my senses controlled, performed all rites, and having worshipped Viṣṇu's lotus-like feet I went to Puṣkara. On the way

my friend named Vimala, going from the holy place Indraprastha, met me.

50-60. O demonesses, the brāhmaṇa, causing me to return, took me to the holy place Śakra-(i.e. Indra-)prastha, giving all (desired) objects. There is holy Dvārakā fashioned by Viṣṇu himself. There I actually saw Viṣṇu, not in form but through words. There he and I bathed to obtain devotion for Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu, of the form of Kṛṣṇa, gave it to him and me. We heard Viṣṇu's words, but did not see his form. We secured devotion for him. From that place I came to Puṣkara. O demonesses, I tell you that this water in the water-pot is from that holy place called Dvārakā, the chief among holy places. I have told you what you had asked me. Seeing this bad plight of you, compassion is produced in my heart. Tell me what I should do. I am at your disposal. Let knowledge come to you.

Saying so, he sprinkled them with (that) water. Due to the touch of that water they remembered all the acts in their (various) existences, and gave up their powerful demonish bodies. Obtaining divine bodies, and turning into celestial nymphs, they got into an aeroplane that had come from heaven, and saluted the brāhmaṇa. And they said: "O best brāhmaṇa, due to contact with the water from Dvārakā we are freed from demonhood, and are (now) going to heaven. O brāhmaṇa, there is no other better holy place giving all desired objects than this Dvārakā situated in Indraprastha."

Nārada said:

61-68. Speaking like this, O king, they got into the aeroplanes. And ordered by the brāhmaṇa, they went by that (aeroplane) to the eastern direction. A man, hearing the greatness of this Dvārakā situated on the bank of Yamunā, is freed from sins, O king. The same fruit as is had by giving meals to a hundred brāhmaṇas as desired by them, is produced by listening to this greatness. O king, as happiness is experienced on worshipping Viṣṇu, similarly (it is had) by listening to the greatness of this Dvārakā. That fruit which is got by giving twenty palas of gold (to a brāhmaṇa) at the time of the solar eclipse and the lunar eclipse, is obtained by one hearing the greatness of this (Dvārakā). Having heard (the

account of) the acquisition of a son by Vimala, (a man) obtains a son; and hearing (the account of) the acquisition of his friend's devotion (a man) secures the best devotion. He who, endowed with devotion, listens to (the account of) the liberation of the demonesses, goes like them in an aeroplane to heaven. O best king, I have described to you the greatness of Dvārakā that should be resorted by men in the three worlds and that is situated at Śakratīrtha. Tell me, what other (account) more meritorious than this, I should relate to you. No delay should be done in (securing) one's bliss.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED NINE

The Story of Brāhmaṇa Mukunda

Yudhiṣṭhira said:

1-2. O Saubhari, of which holy place, situated at Śakratīrtha, did the sage Nārada describe the greatness to Śibi? Therefore, a desire to hear it is produced in me. Tell me who have bowed (to you) the meritorious dialogue between Śibi and Nārada.

Saubhari said:

3. O Dharmarāja, king Śibi, having heard the description (made) by Nārada, and also the greatness of Dvārakā, respectfully asked him only.

Śibi said:

4-5. O son of Brahmā, O greatest god, I have heard the excellent, wonderful greatness of Dvārakā situated on the slope of Indraprastha. O sage, if there is any sacred story (about someone) in Ayodhyā, then tell it to me who am thirsty of drinking the nectar of your words.

Nārada said:

6-24. As to this there is a holy account, destroying great sins, of a barber and Mukunda, a diligent brāhmaṇa. Both the barber,

the killer of a brāhmaṇa, and the king who died prematurely, went to heaven due to the favour of Kośalā. The city is situated on the bank of Candrabhāgā. There was a sinful, censurable barber, Caṇḍaka by name. The sinful one snatched the wealth of others through stealing. He killed the travellers with weapons and nooses etc. and robbed them (of their possessions). He was always engaged in gambling and (drinking) liquor, and hankered after others' wives. He broke the walls of temples, and sold the bricks and stones. Near his locality lived a brāhmaṇa, endowed with wealth, knowing the Vedic rites, and named Mukunda, O king. Once at night he with his limbs loosened after fatigue due to coitus had fearlessly slept, having embraced his young wife. That Caṇḍaka entered at night the house of that Mukunda to snatch away ornaments etc. (found) in the mansion. Taking whatever was (found) outside the mansion, he went home, and again entered the brāhmaṇa's house. He made a great effort to break the door; (but) he was blocked by iron bolts and was unable to open it. He then climbed (over the wall) and entered the brāhmaṇa's house. The cruel one, holding a sword in his hand, entered the mansion. There he saw the couple, asleep and alarmed. To snatch away the golden ornaments, he approached them. The barber, after having taken many ornaments lying on one side of the bed, extended his hand to snatch away ornaments (put) on his body. The brāhmaṇa was awakened by the thief's touch and was overcome by fear. He did not say anything; (but) closing his eyes remained there only. When the sinful thief took the ornaments from his body and moved, the brāhmaṇa unable to bear the loss of his wealth, came from behind him, and seized him with his hands. O king, the thief also struck the brāhmaṇa with his sword. With his pierced belly, he cried. 'O father, O mother.' People shouting "What (happened)?" came near him. They saw him with his entrails coming out and his body smeared with blood. And they asked Mukunda: "Who has done such an act?" With great difficulty he too spoke like this to his relatives:

Mukunda said:

25-26a. This is the result of my deeds done in the previous birth. None (else) gives pleasure or pain to a human being. These

are just (the results of) piety and impiety. Their root lies in one's former act(s).

Nārada said:

26b-28a. Speaking like this, he was troubled by great agony. O king, at that time, when his friends were looking on (i.e. in the presence of his friends) he cast his life. O kind, then his mother, a chaste brāhmaṇa-lady wept after putting his head, adorned with ear-rings on her lap.

The mother said:

28b-35a. O son, you, reaching the final stage (i.e. dying) have destroyed me, as the day's grace is destroyed by the sun going to the western mountain. O very intelligent one, this body (of you) which is fit for being smeared with sandal, has, having plunged me into the ocean of affliction and grief, been greyish due to dust. Your habit of chewing tāmbūla is certainly being perpetuated by its being mixed with emission of blood. Those very eyes of you which formerly surpassed the beauty of lotuses have now become, as it were, covered with a mass of darkness. O child, get up, get up. Teach your students. At the end of the Vaiśvadeva (sacrifice), honour the guest that has arrived. Your friends, standing at the door, have called you. Go to them. Give them whatever is to be given to them, and take from them whatever is to be received. Oh, Oh! Give reply to me. I fall at your feet. Otherwise, I shall cast my life near you.

Nārada said:

35b-36a. Saying so, the mother of Mukunda, then fainted. His wife, taking his head on her lap, wailed:

The wife said:

36b-41. O lord, O ocean of virtues, listen to my words. If for some reason you are angry with your mother, speak out to me. O good one, formerly you never resorted to silence like this. Some younger brother has insulted you. This parrot in the cage does not eat food without you. Give him well-cooked food, so also to the sārikā uttering indistinct but sweet words. Teach the

parrot and the sārikā the series of names of Viṣṇu (like) 'Rāma, Rāma; Hare Kṛṣṇa'. Get up. The two are very clever. What offence have I done to you, that you are not talking to me? I have well preserved the wealth which you have given to me. O lord, I will not wait till the delivery of your lustre (i.e. semen) that you have put into me. I shall follow you.

Nārada said:

42-44. Having thus lamented, that dear wife of Mukunda, desiring to follow him, stopped weeping. O king, then the ascetic, the preceptor of Mukunda, called Vedāyana, wandering over the earth went to his house. "Where has Mukunda gone? The mother and the wife of the intelligent one are not seen." Thus he then asked the female servant.

The female servant said:

45-47a. O preceptor, some thief killed my master at night. He took (away) all the ornaments and silken garments of the daughter-in-law. Falling dead, he (i.e. his body) is at the top of the mansion. His mother, the daughter-in-law, his brothers, fallen into the ocean of great grief, are weeping near him.

Nārada said:

47b-49a. Having heard these words uttered by the female servant, the ascetic, going up to (the top of) the mansion saw his dead disciple. Seeing his relatives weeping excessively near him, the wise one desiring to take them up from the ocean of grief, said to them:

Vedāyana said:

49b-59. O mother, tell me whether you are thus lamenting for his body or his soul. Tell me the truth. (Your) lamenting is not proper for both (the body and the soul). This body, an aggregate of the elements, is earned due to (i.e. as a result of) deeds commenced (by one in one's existences). When they are exhausted, the elements get separated from them. The coming together of them with the deeds is the birth of men. When they perish, the getting separated of them (i.e. the elements) is the death (of men). Since the coming together or getting separated of the

beings is due to their deeds, the wise should not lament for the dull body, dependent on (the deeds). Birth and death are seen in the soul due to the beginningless illusion. (A man) thinks them (to be there) due to his looking upon the body as the soul. (In reality) they are not there. When that (notion of identifying the body with the soul) is removed, he (becomes) that pure, formless Brahman which is self-illumined, the cause of the world, itself beyond a cause (i.e. having no cause), distinguished with virtues, which is eternal, which is knowledge, joy and which always illumines the world with its lustre. The tongue never licks it. The eyes never see it. The ears never hear it. The nose never smells it. The skin never touches it. It is beyond the senses. It is self-illumined; it is self-sighted. It is never the object. It is heyond the mind. It cannot be grasped even by the intelligence. Deities of pure sattva that are the forms of its incarnation serve it, but do not understand its form which is beyond the existent and the non-existent. Such is the nature of the (highest) soul. What man would be so foolish as to be angry with it, since it is neither produced, nor does it perish?

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED TEN

Mukunda Goes to Heaven

Nārada said:

1-15. Having thus enlightened them with words expressing the highest truth, the ascetic got done his (obsequial) rites. The learned one stopped the young, pregnant wife of Mukunda, who insisted on following her husband. O king, having taken his bones, his brother, along with the anchorite, went to drop them into the water of Gaṅgā. O king, the brāhmaṇa (Mukunda's brother) and the ascetic reached along with the members of a caravan this holy place Indraprastha after a few days. O king, in this Kośalā which is in Indraprastha on the bank of Gaṅgā on earth, they slept at night. Keeping the bundle of the bones between themselves, the two, fatigued due to the journey, went

to sleep. When, at night the members of the caravan had slept, a dog came there to take away cooked food etc. The dog, repeatedly smelling the kitchen, licking the vessels, at times tolerating the stroke of a staff, moved in the entire camp. Then being struck by someone on the head, he ran from there like a hen-pecked husband struck by his wife but unable to retaliate. The dog again entered the same place with a desire to lick the vessels containing food, as he was struck with staffs and bricks, like a poor person loving a prostitute (enters her house) with a desire for enjoyment. Thus wandering, the dog (came) where the two were asleep, and took away the bundle of bones. Having carried it for a distance, he tore the bundle with his teeth and seeing the fleshless bones in it, threw them into the water of this Kośalā. The moment the bones were thrown into this water, O king, Mukunda, seated in a divine aeroplane, came there. Seeing his preceptor and younger brother asleep, he gently awakened them. O king, he, of a divine form, having saluted his teacher, said:

Mukunda said:

16-19. O my preceptor Vedāyana, I salute you. O my younger brother, my blessing to you. Due to your favour my bones have fallen into this holy place. This I, having died, having gone to hell and got its fruit, have secured a divine course due to the grace of this holy place. I have come here to salute you, my preceptor, who are a holy place. I, going to heaven in this divine aeroplane, saluted you, this holy place, and saw (i.e. met) my brother. (Please) allow me. I (shall) go to heaven causing happiness.

Nārada said:

20. Hearing these words of Mukunda, his preceptor Vedāyana with his amazement removed, said to him seated in the aeroplane.

Vedāyana said:

21-22. O Mukunda, tell me the truth. After your death, to which world did you go, from where you are now going to heaven, O dear one? O dear one, what happened there? Who is

the ruler of that world? What kind of subjects are there? What are the religious practices? Tell all that.

Mukunda said:

23-28a. O preceptor, I shall tell you what took place after (my) death. Now my recollection is revived due to the favour of this holy place. When that wicked barber Caṇḍaka killed me, Yama's very fearful servants came (there). They were tawny-eyed; their hair was red; their bodies, nails and lower lips were dark. They were short; had long feet, short noses and projected teeth. They said to one another: "Take him, take him, by the order of Yama, to (Yama's) city (called) Saṁyamanī only." Speaking like this, very angrily they put me into a body being tormented; fastening me by fierce nooses they struck me with iron mallets. I who was being taken by them, being overcome by grief, wept very much on the path having heated sand on it; and I was again beaten by them. And being firm, they, very much deriding me, said:

Yama's messengers said:

28b-33. Since you offended against your preceptor explaining (to you) the eternal Brahman, what will you do before Yama? You will have to see his fierce face. You will have to experience the fruit of that fearful sin. O sinner, due to that sin only you died prematurely.

Saying so, in a short time they took me to Saṁyamanī, Yama's city, situated in (an area of) many yojanas, where king Yama himself dwelt. Having saluted king Yama, and having placed me before him, they reported to him about me: "This sinful brāhmaṇa is brought." Seeing me, king Yama said to the members of his assembly:

Yama said:

34-35a. O members of the assembly, being well attentive, listen to my words. When Brahmā assigned me this charge, he, the grandsire of the worlds, spoke to me like this:

Brahmā said:

35b-37. You, the lord of Saṁyamanī, will punish impious

people. O son of the Sun, punish them in accordance with their offence. You should throw into hells these two, committing major sins, viz. one who does not support his parents and one who offends against his preceptor. The punishment would be staying in each hell for a myriad years. O you lord of the (Southern) quarter, you have not to show compassion to these two.

Yama said:

38-41. Therefore, O members of the assembly, by Brahmā's words I do not take pity on a man offending against his preceptor or not supporting his parents. This brāhmaṇa has offended against his preceptor. Due to that offence he met with an untimely death; and he, unfit to be seen, is brought (here) by my servants at my order. O servants, first throw him into the fearful Raurava (hell) for a myriad years; and taking him who has offended against his preceptor out of that (hell), throw him again into another (hell) for that much period. Then quickly let him stay for the proper period in all the hells.

Mukunda said:

42-51. O preceptor Vedāyana, O master, the servants, by Yama's order, took me to the fearful Raurava (hell), and fastening me with chains, threw me into it. There, O dear one, I experienced very severe, poignant agony, so that even a moment was passed as a yuga by me. Staying there I passed thirty days painfully. Today on this thirty-first day I have come out (of it), when (my) bones fell into this most excellent holy place. Due to the grace of this holy place my sin due to offending against my preceptor, perished instantly; and I went to heaven. I shall happily live in heaven as long as fourteen Indras (rule the heaven). The subjects that live in Yama's city cause fear to sinners, but are pleasing to the pious. The young women there have faces like those of lions, elephants, boars; have large fangs, plump bellies; have faces like those of cats; have tawny hair; and have long feet and long hands. When I became free from the sin due to the favour of this holy place, I saw in Yama's abode the subjects of divine forms. All of them were truthful in their speech, were full of modest behaviour, had worn divine ornaments, and were adorned with divine garments. O dear one, I have told this (in reply to)

what you had asked me. (Please) allow me to go to the city of the lord of gods.

Nārada said:

52. That ascetic, having heard these words spoken by his disciple at that time, again asked that brāhmaṇa, Mukunda, O king:

Vedāyana said:

53-55. From your childhood and with affection for your preceptor, you learnt everything from me—Veda with the Pada (-pāṭha) and Krama-pāṭha (the two ways of reciting the Veda), along with the science of words (i.e. grammar). You excellently served me with devotion. O good one, in you reside the virtues of the good like tranquillity, control etc. O dear one, tell me, so that I shall understand it properly, how you committed the sin of offending against your preceptor.

Mukunda said:

56-62. I have never disobeyed them who gave me birth, performed my thread-ceremony, those who supported their daughters and the Vedas, so also him who made me wear the sacred thread. I served my mother-in-law and my father-in-law like a servant. I did not also disobey you who taught me the holy texts. (But) I offended against him who was the family priest, the preceptor of my family, and who had mastered the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas. (Please) listen to it. The settled rule of our family is: 'If a righteous son is born in our family, then his umblical cord is cut off after a cow, or a gift (equal to) her (value) is given to the family priest.' O dear one, when a son was just born to me only on an auspicious day, I, the foolish one, did not perform the rite of (i.e. befitting) my family. Due to my not performing it, I offended against my preceptor. I have told (you) all this as to how I committed a sin by offending against the preceptor. Now permit me. It (shall) go to heaven.

Vedāyana said:

63-64. Due to the favour of this auspicious Kośalā, situated within Indraprastha, the recollection of the previous existence

appears. O Mukunda, due to which religious merit were your bones dropped in this holy place? O sinless one, tell it (if) you have its recollection.

Mukunda said:

65-69. (One) evening a brāhmaṇa came to my house. I duly gave him a seat and food. He too, having eaten as he desired, slept on a good bed. At night his entire body suffered from a very severe fever. Troubled by it, the brāhmaṇa did not get sleep. In the morning only he died. When his death took place, O preceptor, I performed all the rites like cremation and dropped his bones, according to the sacred rule, in Gaṅgā. Due to that religious merit my bones fell into this auspicious holy place, named Kośalā, fashioned by Brahmā.

Nārada said:

70. O king, the brāhmaṇa, having thus told his account, and having a charming body like that of a god, quickly went to heaven in an aeroplane. It is told how he met his death at the hands of the thief and obtained heaven through the grace of this best holy place.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED ELEVEN

Caṇḍaka's Fate

Nārada said:

1-3a. O Śibi, I have told you the entire excellent account of Mukunda. Listen also to the account of the barber Caṇḍaka from me. O king, on the day when Caṇḍaka killed the brāhmaṇa Mukunda, the citizens heard that news. Hearing that they clearly reported like this to the king:

The citizens said:

3b-4. O king, Caṇḍaka has killed Mukunda, the best brāhmaṇa, and has taken (away) his ample wealth. Do what is pro-

per. You are the protector of us (your) subjects, and the chastiser of the bad.

Nārada said:

5-7. Hearing this, the king with his eyes red with anger, said to the minister who was by his side: "Listen to what these (citizens) say. Quickly bring that sinner. Otherwise I shall kill you. O most sinful one, get up, get up, (and) do (what leads to) the happiness of the good. A king in whose country his subjects are harassed by thieves and who does not protect them from them (i.e. the thieves), goes to hell."

Nārada said:

8-10a. O Śibi, having heard these words of the king, the minister quickly mounted his horse, and with a hundred foot-soldiers went to Mukunda's house, and asked his relatives: "Who killed Mukunda? Tell me the truth. By the order of the king I shall kill the sinner."

Nārada said:

10b. Hearing these words of the minister, the relatives of the brāhmaṇa said:

The relatives of the brāhmaṇa said:

11-12. O minister, Mukunda was killed by Caṇḍaka, the barber. This is his turban that had fallen when he was running away. The young wife of Mukunda herself has seen the sinner. What shall we do? We have plunged in the ocean of grief.

Nārada said:

13-19. Hearing these words of the relatives of the brāhmaṇa, the minister went to the house of that sinful barber. Quickly he got down from the horse and with some foot-soldiers went into his house and saw him asleep. Ordered by him the foot-soldiers seized him by his hair that moment (only) and they raised that sinful, mean barber from (his) bed. When the sinful barber saying, "What is this? what is this?" opened his eyes, he saw him (i.e. the minister). Recollecting his act—the sin that he had committed at night—he, for a moment, remained with his

face hung down and realising (that) Yama had stood over his head. Getting him arrested by his foot-soldiers, the minister took him to the king, and thus spoke to the king: "O king, this barber Caṇḍaka, the killer of the brāhmaṇa, has been brought. I shall quickly do what you order."

The king said:

20-22. O best minister, O you who know religious practices, O long-lived one, listen to my words. Here there is this clean, best river, Candrabhāgā. Those who cast their lives here go to the place of gods. Therefore, this wicked barber should not be killed here. If (he would be killed) outside the boundary of five krośas of this (place), he would go to fearful hells. Make no delay.

Nārada said:

23-30. Thus addressed by the king, the best minister prompted cāṇḍālas to kill him at the king's order, O king. The cāṇḍālas taking him up on the other bank of Candrabhāgā to a place at a distance of two yojanas, cut off his head. The sinner became a serpent having a deadly body, living in the hollow of a dhava tree, and with his mouth producing flames of poison. The dhava tree dried due to the fire from his hissing as a pool full of water dries due to the heat of the sun. Due to the sinner's going there the dhava tree and the land around it, with the grass etc. cut off, became a barren land. O Śibi, once there came a caravan from the southern region. It especially was going to Nārāyaṇa's hermitage, called Badara. On the way a brāhmaṇa had joined the caravan. O king, carrying on his shoulder a holeless wooden box containing the bones of his father and mother, he was going to drop them into the water of Gaṅgā giving the desired objects even to sinners.

31-41a. He too came there to the forest where the serpent was and kept the box made of red rods at a secluded place. Coming there the serpent raised a rod with his hood. When the box was partially opened, he entered the box. The rod returned to its original position. The serpent, dreadful due to poison, remained motionless there in the box only. Then in the morning all of them moved from that place, O king. The brāhmaṇa also taking the box covered with a blanket on his head, proceeded to Gaṅgā.

O king, the caravan of the pilgrims reached this pure Kośalā after some days. Then the brāhmaṇa, sick due to cold opened the blanket which covered the box there on the auspicious slope of Ayodhyā. The serpent too who had no food (for a long time) got his food, i.e. air, and throwing up a strong rod, moved out of it. Seeing the serpent to have moved out, all men, saying 'A serpent, a serpent', and with clods in their hands, went there. While the serpent was running (away) he was hit by one of them. While the pilgrims were watching he cast his life. Giving up his serpent-body, he obtained godhead, difficult to be obtained. Getting into a divine aeroplane, he spoke these (words) to the people:

The serpent said:

41b-44. O brāhmaṇas from the south, hear my words. Formerly I was a mean barber named Caṇḍaka who killed a brāhmaṇa. Due to the great sin of the murder of a brāhmaṇa, I became a serpent in (this) desert. Having experienced the miseries in the hell for five lakhs of years, I have passed two myriads of years in this existence as a serpent. Due to the favour of this holy place, I have obtained excellent godhead. Therefore, this sacred place giving all (desired) objects should not be abandoned; from it, I, a sinner, have reached heaven.

Nārada said:

45-50. Thus that sinful barber, having reached a censurable existence, went seated in an aeroplane to heaven. The southerners, becoming ascetics, lived at that sacred place—whose grandeur they had seen—only, with their minds (fixed) on the lotus-like feet of Viṣṇu. That best brāhmaṇa, noticing the greatness of this holy place and having developed faith in it, dropped his parents' bones there. When the pieces of the bones fell there, his parents, seated in a divine aeroplane, came there at that moment only. And, while (other) people were listening, they said to their son: "O son, live long; be happy in the world with wealth and grains. Due to your having caused the liberation of both of us, you will obtain salvation. This is not false." Due to the dropping of the bones, both—the fruit that the son would have by offering piṇḍas into Gaṅgā and the parents' going to heaven—took place.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED TWELVE

The Efficacy of Kośalā

Nārada said:

1-6a. Speaking like that, the brāhmaṇa's parents, of divine forms, got into the excellent aeroplane, and went to Viṣṇu's city. Their son, having lived there in Kośalā only for three days, went home, thinking about the grandeur of the holy place. This, O king, is called Kośalā by the wise. I shall tell (about) it to you whose mind has a curiosity to listen to it. Having gone to that Kośalā, the brāhmaṇa chaps from the south, desiring to die (there), lived in it giving proper objects. One of them going to Nārāyaṇa's place after ignoring it, was stopped by Viṣṇu in the guise of an old brāhmaṇa. He thus spoke to the brāhmaṇa:

The old brāhmaṇa said:

6b-15. O best brāhmaṇa, ignoring this auspicious Kośalā, where are you going? O brāhmaṇa, this holy place Indraprastha is the best of all holy places. O son, here is this Kośalā, dear to Viṣṇu, and giving salvation. Success will not come to you there, where you are going after ignoring this giving a position free from all desires; and Viṣṇu will be averse to you. O brāhmaṇa, if you desire salvation, then this holy place will give you that object, with the desire of which, you, after taking a pledge, will bathe at this holy place. O brāhmaṇa, even within the range of your sight (i.e. when you were seeing), a serpent became a god. Due to the favour of this the brāhmaṇa couple resides in heaven. How then do you, even after having reached it due to the dawn of good fortune, and even after being convinced on seeing its greatness, ignore it? O fool, you appear to be like one who, after being oppressed by thirst, leaves the ocean of nectar, and goes to muddy water. Your fate appears to be like that of him who, being deluded, throws into a well the desire-yielding gem that was in his hand. Your fate is that of a foolish man who, after having propitiated Viṣṇu, desires the worthless pleasure of senses. No man goes (to another place) after having ignored this Kośalā, giving all desired objects. One who bathes here, goes to heaven. One who dies here lives among the immortal.

Nārada said:

16. O king, having heard (these) words of Viṣṇu, upholding the welfare of brāhmaṇas, he spoke to the brāhmaṇa, "Badarikāśrama is the best."

The brāhmaṇa said:

17-21. O best brāhmaṇa, in me who have heard about the grandeur of the small village, faith is produced by means of these words of you. I have never heard about this holy place, Indraprastha. O old one, how is Kośalā (situated) in it, where actually Viṣṇu (lives), and where the meditating saints are liberated. How should I ignore that meritorious hermitage and stay here as Viṣṇu, having himself come (here), and telling me like this, would stop me? O brāhmaṇa, this holy place is superior to Badarī. So, though driven to that hermitage, I shall not proceed (to it). Desiring salvation (I have come here). Otherwise I would not have stayed here.

Nārada said:

22-23a. When the brāhmaṇa spoke like this, Viṣṇu, the four-armed one, giving up the ordinary form (of a man), and having a divine form, said to the noble brāhmaṇa, desiring salvation:

Viṣṇu said:

23b-28. This Indraprastha is best of all holy places. As Śiva is among all those who know Brahman, as Gaṅgā is among rivers, as Himālaya is among mountains, as Garuḍa is among birds, as Śakra is among gods, as Nārada is among Viṣṇu's devotees, as the Sun is among luminaries, as the Milky Ocean is among oceans, as brāhmaṇa is among castes, as the grandsire is among the created, as the son of Kausalyā is among the incarnations of Viṣṇu, so is this holy place Indraprastha the best of all holy places. A man, without or with a desire, sometimes goes to a holy place. At every place I myself am the giver of the fruit. A devotee who goes (to another holy place) by ignoring Kośalā situated in Indraprastha, does not obtain the fruit from the protector of the host of the givers of fruits.

Nārada said:

29-35. Having thus heard those words, and having seen that excellent form, and having saluted Viṣṇu, the brāhmaṇa left. The lord, the soul of the universe, instantly disappeared. He devoutly worshipped that brāhmaṇa as the supreme principle. Having come there to Kośalā the brāhmaṇa told the entire account to all his companions, O king. Those noble brāhmaṇas from the south, did not eat there and abandoned their ordinary bodies. Just then, Śrī Viṣṇu mounted upon Garuḍa came there with his attendants in those many aeroplanes shining with lustre. They, with divine forms, seeing him and the aeroplanes with attendants, fell prostrate like staffs on the earth. All the brāhmaṇas, having divine knowledge and bodies praised that god of divine form whose lotus-like feet are adored by gods.

The brāhmaṇas said:

36-44. Salutation to you who have a body shining like an atasī-flower, who have covered yourself with a yellow garment, who have various lotuses put on the bright ear-rings, who have put blue small lotuses on your ears. Devotion to you is indeed the desire-yielding creeper (tree) which, when resorted to, gives what is desired by the mind. Similar is this your Kośalā with objects of enjoyment. The two are secured through your grace. We salute your lotus-like feet saluted by respectable hosts of gods etc., thought of by delighted groups of meditating saints, and the root of salvation, the source of the highest joy. O lord of Lakṣmī, we have reached your form, distinguished with charming marks like Śrīvatsa etc.; yet we long for your service, secured and honoured by Nārada and others. (Even) Lakṣmī, residing within your chest (i.e. in your heart) does not have that happiness which is obtained by those who have become your servants. O lord of Lakṣmī, Śrī Maheśa knows it. He and none else has experienced it in the world. Among us, even having no attachment, he is to be honoured. The best sages like Nārada, your devotees, worship the lord of the worlds, due to him. Śambhu, though his heart is full of the joy due to Brahman, is satisfied only by serving you. Full of devotion to you he repeatedly dances excessively to receive your virtues. For this reason human beings who have secured your service, have no desires.

His two doorkeepers, with your marks on their bodies reach their own abode through delusion(?). Your desire is with reference to this world. Quick fall of your worlds never takes place. Who would know your Māyā which is difficult to be known by gods like Brahmā, Śiva etc.?

Nārada said:

45. That lord, eager to reach his place, being thus praised by them, said with a voice deep like that of clouds, to the southerners.

The lord said:

46-52. O brāhmaṇas, due to the grace of this Kośalā you have obtained absorption into me. You will also obtain my service. O brāhmaṇas, from today this excellent holy place of me will be known by the great name 'Dakṣiṇakośalā', where, Rāma, born as Daśaratha's son, will kill Rāvaṇa. That where a poor wise man goes up to Vaikuṇṭha is called Uttarakośalā by all excellent sages. Even he who would live here without that (i.e. knowledge) goes to heaven. They say that this Dakṣiṇakośalā is ten times superior to it. Some best sages describe it to be eleven times superior. I think the difference between that and this is: My attendants carry to Vaikuṇṭha one who dies there; while I myself take him who dies here; putting him on Garuḍa I absorb him into myself.

Nārada said:

53-55. O king, having thus spoken to those brāhmaṇas, and taking them (with himself) and himself praising the greatness of this holy place, Viṣṇu went to Vaikuṇṭha. O lord of the world, I have told you the reason for which the wise call her Dakṣiṇakośalā. O best king, I have described to you the greatness of Kośalā which destroys the sins of Kali, which is desired for reaching the feet of the Lotus-eyed (Viṣṇu); (now) I shall tell you the account that took place in Madhuvana.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED THIRTEEN

A Śrāddha at Madhuvana Is More Meritorious

Nārada said:

1-7. O dear one, O Śibi, Viṣṇu, who was pleased, established (this) city, this Madhuvana for Indra. Here is this holy place called Viśrānti, best in the three worlds, giving salvation to the very wise men, holy and resorted to by the good. O king, Viṣṇu, the universal soul, lives in the form of Śrī Kola (i.e. a bear) at this best, meritorious holy place called Viśrānti. O king, it is said that he who has always propitiated Viṣṇu during many existences, dies here. On the very bank of Kālindī (i.e. Yamunā) another holy place called Viśrānti, is fashioned by Viṣṇu himself, where Kaṁsa was hurled down. O king, the two are equal in merits giving Vaikuṇṭha. Due to the dawn of good fortune, it, giving all (desired) objects, is obtained. To you I shall tell the importance of this holy place, having heard which you will obtain the fruit of bathing in all holy places.

8-16. O king, there lived a poor brāhmaṇa named Kuśala in the auspicious city of Kirāta in the land at the foot of the Himālaya mountain. His wife of a bad conduct was fondly attached to a man of a bad character. The unchaste woman deluded her husband with her (bad) acts. Her husband deluded by her was unable to ward her off. He, the poor one, was intent on obeying her orders, and was (i.e. lived), as it were, bought (by her). People ridiculed the brāhmaṇa, the husband of the unchaste woman. He too, scared of the ridicule, did not stir out of the house. She put on very costly silken garments and ornaments given by her paramours. The wicked one, though ridiculed, was not ashamed. Due to his servile nature she, the wicked one, contemptuously gave her husband old garments taken off from the bodies (of others). That her own husband who was thus slighted by the unchaste woman, being very much afflicted by grief, ate (i.e. drank) poison at night and died. The wanton woman was then scared of the king due to her bad conduct. She spoke (these) false words: "I shall follow my husband." O king, her friends, tutored by her only, went near her, and speaking like this, stopped her.

The friends said:

17-22. O deer-eyed woman, why do you do this worthless act, that you are ready to destroy your body resembling gold? O friend, what happiness did you get from this poor, incapable (husband), not industrious, and filling his own belly? Nourish this young son? Except you, who is his guardian? O beautiful lady, all of us will die, if you die. O you beautiful lady, look after this your house; rise. Let this your son, who will give happiness later, be victorious. All the relatives desire your life (i.e. that you should live). Get up. Do what is desired in their minds by your relatives. O good one, all your friends due to affection for you, are weeping. Stop them who are much grieved (from weeping) by giving (i.e. speaking to) them your words.

Nārada said:

23. That wicked one, having thus heard their words flowing from righteousness, raised her face, and making her own relatives listen, said:

The friend said:

24-28. I know that the proper words that you spoke are indeed true. Yet women must respect their husbands, giving (the merit of) both the worlds. O friends, listen to words uttered by me and following the code of laws. If it is proper, permit me (to follow my husband). That woman, even though she is a sinner, who, devoted to her husband, follows her dead husband, lives with him for a long time in heaven. Women should never desert their husbands even though he is poor or diseased. He, alive or dead, should be followed (by them). This is (i.e. thus says) the ancient holy text. Thinking thus in mind, O friends, I am following my husband. He (i.e. son) will live by his fate. What shall I do to him?

Nārada said:

29. Thus addressed, her wicked friends, giving a wicked counsel, said to her, deluding all people by means of her righteous words:

The friends said:

30-33. O you lady of beautiful eyebrows, first desert us and then follow your husband, O dear one. All of us are unable to put up with separation from you. You, destroying us, and following your own husband, will have little religious merit and great sin. How can you obtain heaven? You well looked after this husband of yours, when he was alive. O friend, you have done what is laid down for a husband and his wife. As long as this your son is unable to have his livelihood, he will live by your fortune.

Nārada said:

34-45. Thus addressed, she turned away from following her husband. She got performed his obsequial rites by her son. Then after some time she thought of getting his thread ceremony performed, got it performed by brāhmaṇas after having given them the wealth given to her by her paramours. The boy born in adultery[1], whose thread-ceremony was performed, who knew the real nature of human soul, quickly went out of the house, and was highly devoted to Viṣṇu. Having secured the company of the good, and given up his trifling body, he went up to the perpetual world, not accessible to the meditating saints. When the son went out she was unhappy in her mind. O king, on the same day she again dallied with her paramours. When she was thus dallying with her paramours, in course of time old age, destroying the arrogance of beauty, came over to her. Seeing her body stricken with old age, she was abandoned by the paramours. She spoiling the character of the group of other (women), became a go-between. Then she snatched the cow, along with her calf, of one brāhmaṇa; and, O king, she sold it for some money. O king, thus she passed some time (working) as a messenger. Then her dry body became worthless. When leprosy overcame her body, her five limbs—hands, feet, and the nose as the fifth, dropped. When, she who was reduced to such a condition, did not get food, she was taken to the market by a maid servant. There she, appealing to people with piteous words, and being despised, filled her belly.

1. Kuṇḍa: A son born in adultery. A son born of a woman from someone who is not her husband, and when the husband is alive.

46-51. O king, a brāhmaṇa, knowing all the Vedas, a great orator, who lived near, seeing her, spoke these words: "Sin gives pain to people in this world and the next. Therefore, men, afraid of pain, should not commit a sin. A man who, having committed a sin, performs an expiation, has not committed the sin; so he would not get its fruit. He who, having repeatedly committed sins, does not perform an expiation, meets the same fate as this woman, in this world and in the next. In this world she committed a host of sins. She will suffer its fruit here only, and also in a hell. In the holy texts an expiation is seen for all sinners, but not for women averse to (good) deeds."

Nārada said:

52-63a. Speaking like this, the best brāhmaṇa, afraid of seeing her, again and again remembering Viṣṇu, and saluting the Sun, left. O king, she, thus suffering the fruit of her acts, obtained by herself, became miserable and died after a few days. No burning on funeral pyre of her, the sinful one, was done. Cāṇḍālas dragged her by (seizing) her hair, and took her out of the city. At the time of her death, Yama's servants came (there), and making her take up a body that caused torment, they took her to Yama's city. That god, gentle to the pious and actually hated by the sinners, seeing her again, turned away his face. Yama, thus turning away his face, ordered his servants: "As pronounced by me, throw her into the Raurava hell." Thus addressed, the servants remembering the acts which she had done, took her and threw her, with her face (turned) down, into that fierce Raurava. In that Raurava (hell) she remained for one period of Manu. Later she was born as an alligator eating the flesh of the dead in a cremation ground. There also, she, eating excessively the flesh of the dead, got the fruit, viz. misery. of her acts. Once that brāhmaṇa who was born from her womb in the stock of brāhmaṇas, and who was roaming came there to the cremation ground. The sage's son, seeing her eating the flesh of the dead, thought for a moment in his mind, and recognised her to be his mother. Recognising her to be his mother, he said to himeslf:

The sage's son said:

63b-66a. Today I shall emancipate her from the ocean of

misery. Oh, a being is not freed, except at (the end of) the period of suffering (the fruit of his sins), from the sinful deed done by himself. She passed in the hell the period called (i.e. that was equal to) the period of a Manu, and with men she has passed here a hundred years. How much has she to experience (the fruit of) her great sin hereafter?

Nārada said:

66b-67. Thinking like this, he, closing his eyes, again thought by means of his sacred knowledge. Having noticed the fearful condition, with his divine sight, of that sinner, the best brāhmaṇa again said to himself, O king:

The sages' son said:

68-71. Oh! her liberation is not seen (to be possible) even after a hundred kalpas, except her dying at a holy place, or submitting herself to (Viṣṇu) the lord of Lakṣmī. Or she will not obtain heaven except by my offering piṇḍas at Gayā, even for hundreds of kalpas. In this birth of her she will never have these two—death in the region of a holy place, or liking for serving Viṣṇu. The (only) cause of the emancipation of her, the sinful one plunged in the ocean of sins, will be a śrāddha performed by me at Gayā.

Nārada said:

72-73. Thinking like this, the pious one went to his father's hermitage. He told his father the entire cause of his mother's misery. Having heard the son's words telling (about) his mother's misery, the best sage spoke to his son who had bowed his neck (i.e. head):

The sage said:

74-82. As a king, knowing polity, takes the sovereignty of his enemy in a war, O dear one, quickly raise your mother from this miserable condition. If a son, capable of emancipating his mother or father from misery, does not emancipate them, he goes to hell. Having received water and piṇḍas from their sons at an excellent holy place, the dead ancestors go to heaven from hell, and from heaven to Viṣṇu's place. Therefore, get up quickly. Go

to Khāṇḍava-vana. There is the holy Yamunā, resorted to by the best sages. On her bank is Hariprastha, full of all holy places. Then there is the holy Madhuvana set up by Viṣṇu himself. Having duly bathed there, and having done your (usual) rites, offer a śrāddha to her, your mother, and (also) perform (other) rites. When a śrāddha is offered there by you desiring heaven for her, she abandoning the strong body of an alligator, will reach Viṣṇu's world. O dear one, the good have declared that the religious merit (due to offering a śrāddha) at Madhuvana, is a hundred times more than the one due to offering piṇḍas at Gayā. O dear one, now the Sun has entered the Zodiacal sign Libra. O son, go and offer a śrāddha to your ancestors.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED FOURTEEN

The Greatness of Madhuvana

Nārada said:

1-9. O king, having heard these words of his father, he quickly went to the holy Madhuvana, a hundred times holier than Gayā. Then the learned brāhmaṇa spoke to the brāhmaṇas living at that holy place, and again having invited them after some time, spoke to them words of welcome. Then having washed their feet and worshipped them with sandal etc. he made respectful offering at their feet, and similarly himself sipped (water). Then taking the brāhmaṇas he seated them at the place of the śrāddha. And filling the pot (used) for the rite with darbhas, water, tulasī (leaves), flowers, sandal, sacred rice grains and sesamum-seeds, he remembered Viṣṇu. The brāhmaṇas thrice recited the verse: *Devatābhyaḥ*.... Then he tied it containing sesamum-seeds with darbhas that were purified, in the directions beginning with the east, in the proper order with (the recital of) the hymn *Agniṣvātta* ....With the hymn *Rakṣobhūta*...he tied the ends of the garment worn round the waist into a knot. Then taking the pledge, he gave darbha seat to the brāhmaṇas. Then the best brāhmaṇa invoked his dead ancestors. Then giving respectful offering into their

hands, he turned down the vessel and made it lie on its face. Having offered sandal etc. he, with his sacred thread hanging down over the left shoulder, sipped water. Then the brāhmaṇa gave the pots after having his sacred thread (once) hanging down over the left and (once) over the right shoulder.

10-24. Permitted by the brāhmaṇas, he offered oblations like ghee into the fire. Then he filled those vessels (with water), O king. With his hand turned up and down he took the vessels and taught by the brāhmaṇas he recited (the hymn) *Pṛthvī tvā*... With (the reciting of) the hymn *Asaṁskṛtapraṇītānām*... the brāhmaṇas offered seats with the darbhas strewn (there) with their points in the southern direction. O king, with (the reciting of) the hymn *Agnidagdha*... he put food mixed with ghee and along with water on the seats made by darbhas. Again, with his sacred thread hanging down over the left shoulder, he sipped a mouthful of water. He asked them, "Are you satisfied?" They replied, "We are satisfied." He took the permission of those brāhmaṇas to eat the remaining food. The brāhmaṇa made an altar of the measure of the length of twelve aṅgulas, and drew a line facing the south with a darbha. He laid the firebrand with (the reciting of) the hymn *Ye rūpāṇi*... in the direction of fire. O king, he duly offered darbha-seats and six piṇḍas only to them who were, in the former existence, his mother, father, so also to their parents, i.e. his grandfathers, so also, O best king, who were his maternal great-grandfather and paternal grandfather, along with their wives. Having worshipped them with sandal etc. and having cast off the middle piṇḍa and after having smelt the pot containing the piṇḍas, he put it on his left shoulder. Then taking the vessel containing water, and reciting (the hymn) *Vāje vāje*...again offering respectful oblation to their feet, he pleased them with presents etc. Having followed them up to the door, and having secured their permission, the brāhmaṇa dined along with his relatives, O king. O best king, when the best brāhmaṇa, after thus finishing the śrāddha of his ancestors in the pious Madhuvana, and with his mind tranquil, started for his father's hermitage, he met on his way those who had eaten at the śrāddha. They, seated in six aeroplanes, adorned with divine ornaments, wearing celestial garments thus spoke to the best brāhmaṇa:

The ancestors said:

25-26. O child, O best brāhmaṇa, ask for an excellent boon. You, performing a śrāddha at this holy place, have emancipated us. Due to your favour we have become Viṣṇu's attendants. O you very intelligent one, ask for what is desired in (i.e. by) your mind.

The sage's son said:

27. Who are you? Wherefrom have you come? How did you become (Viṣṇu's) attendants? Why do you grant me a boon without my having obliged you?

Nārada said:

28. Hearing these words of the son in his former existence, the father, who had died after taking poison due to grief, said:

The father said:

29-35. O brāhmaṇa, I am your father, a brāhmaṇa, in your former existence. I was very much troubled by your unchaste mother. Being extremely afflicted, I took poison at night, died prematurely, and, therefore, became a demon: O dear one, after being turned into a demon, I passed a period of Manu and one hundred and fifteen years (in that condition). Now in the (hundred and) sixteenth year, when you performed a śrāddha in this meritorious holy place Madhuvana, I attained godhead. This aeroplane sent by Indra along with attendants and a host of the celestial nymphs has arrived from heaven for me to get in. I, along with the attendants and the host of celestial nymphs, have, while going to the heaven after getting into the excellent aeroplane, come here to give you a boon. Ask for a boon. God bless you. We can't brook any delay. Indra, mounted upon the elephant Airāvata, is waiting for me.

Nārada said:

36-37a. O king, thus telling his son his own account, and giving him the devotion for Viṣṇu (as) asked by him, he went to heaven. Then his mother spoke to him, her son in the previous existence:

The mother said:

37b-41. Due to your favour I have become a goddess and am freed from sins. O best brāhmaṇa, I, though a sinner, have become the friend of Śacī, when you performed the śrāddha at this holy place called Viśrānti. O glorious one, ask for what is desired by your mind. I shall give it to you, since the words of us, the deities, are never falsified. O best brāhmaṇa, you know the sin due to which I, after staying in the hell for a long time, became an alligator in the cremation ground. O son, allow me (to go). Śacī, surrounded by hosts of celestial ladies is waiting for me in the sky.

Nārada said:

42-43. O king, his mother too, having thus spoken to him, her desireless son, went after being saluted by him with his head (bent down) to heaven. Then his grandfather, having similarity of form with Viṣṇu, again spoke (these) words to his grandson, the best brāhmaṇa.

The grandfather said:

44-46. O child, O child, live long. Obtain what is desired by you. Due to your favour we have crossed over this ocean of mundane existence, difficult to cross. O child, I am your grandfather, and this is your grandmother. The chaste lady followed me who had died, and soon obtained residence in the same heaven (as of Viṣṇu). When today you performed the śrāddha-rite at Viśrānti, we have obtained similarity of form with Viṣṇu in his heaven.

Nārada said:

47-48. O best king, the brāhmaṇa, after having spoken like this, went along with her, his wife, to Vaikuṇṭha after having crossed Brahmā's world. O best king, listen attentively to the words, the brāhmaṇa, his great-grandfather spoke to him, which I am telling you.

The great-grandfather said:

49-54. O child, O glorious one, I am your great-grandfather. As a result of my causing an abortion, I obtained the stock

of (i.e. was born as) a pig. Then I went out of it, and being oppressed by my sin, became a dog. Then I became an inanimate object on the best mountain, Vindhya. Then I who for a long time remained in that condition of an inanimate object, was forcibly uprooted by an elephant. Then at that time only you performed the śrāddha at this excellent holy place. And therefore I was freed from that inanimate condition and got an excellent residence in the city of the lord of yakṣas. O best brāhmaṇa, permit me. Due to your favour I (shall) go. With the desire to see you I have come here, and have seen you of a pious appearance (and) the Madhuvana, the best of all holy places.

Nārada said:

55. Thus addressed by him, the sage's son, knowing religious merit, asked, after saluting his great-grandfather with (having bent) his head to him, his great-grandfather:

The sage said:

56-57. O dear one, you were born in a great brāhmaṇa family. How did you, O great one, commit the sin of causing abortion, due to which you obtained (i.e. were born in) a series of censurable stocks? O illustrious one, tell me that if you recollect (it).

The great-grandfather said:

58-66. O best brāhmaṇa, formerly, in the existence of a brāhmaṇa, I maintained myself by the employment of spells and amulets. Due to greed of wealth, I, with my understanding destroyed due to (ill) luck, gave them (clients) medicine for conception and abortion; for greed would take away the understanding of those having no wealth, as the sun takes away the water of the canals in the hot season. O dear one, when a man's understanding perishes, he certainly commits a sin. Due to the sin he gets (into) a hell, and from there goes to (i.e. is born in) a bad stock. In that existence, one pregnant woman asked me: "O brāhmaṇa, shall I give birth to a son or a girl?" Then I said to her: "A daughter will be born to you. (Therefore) I shall give you a medicine for the birth of a son." Thus addressed, the woman, the crest-jewel of the foolish, seized my feet and gave me a pala

of gold. She said to me: "I have given birth to six daughters. You have now told (i.e. predicted) the seventh. After her birth I shall not live. O brāhmaṇa do that by which I shall not give birth to another daughter destroying my life."

67-79. Hearing these words of her, I again said to her: "At the time of your delivery I shall give you a medicine (capable of) generating a son." Saying, "All right" and having heard me she went home and believing in my words, remained waiting for that time. When she had gone, I became anxious like this. Listen as to how I became so. I (shall) tell it. 'She convinced of the birth of a son, gave me a pala of gold. I did not know what (i.e. a boy or a girl) would be born to her. What should be done in this case? How would that (gold of) a measure of a pala remain in the house of me who am poor?' Thinking like this, I handed over to her maid that medicine causing abortion and made her give it to her. Due to that medicine she aborted in the third month (of pregnancy). The sign of either a boy or a girl was not noticed. She, dejected due to the abortion, came to my house, and having no hope for the birth of a son, demanded (back) the gold. Then I showed her powder of bricks (mixed) with ash, and mixed with turmeric powder and with water. "O mother, for the birth of a son to you I have prepared this powder. For preparing that I required double the money that you had given me." Thus addressed by me, she ignored the powder, and went home, saying to me, "O brāhmaṇa, I shall take it from you at the proper time." O dear one, I have thus caused a very fearful (sin of) abortion, due to which I roamed in three very censurable stocks. Now due to your favour I am freed from the state of an inanimate object. O best sage, permit me. I (shall) go to the auspicious Alakā.

Nārada said:

80-82. O king, his great-grandfather, speaking like this, and saluted by him with his head (bent down), went to the northern direction in a beautiful aeroplane having rows of small bells with gandharvas dancing (in it) and charming with jewelled ramparts. Then the great-grandmother of the brāhmaṇa seated in an excellent aeroplane, spoke to her great-grandson, O great king:

The great-grandmother said:

83-85. O you of a good vow, due to this religious merit you have not to go anywhere else except the temple marked with Viṣṇu's lotus-like feet. O sage, this my sinful husband is your great-grandfather. He, of a very wicked mind, though warded off by me, committed a sin. He too, of a very sinful mind, is liberated by you from the ocean of misery. Who is able to describe your virtues?

Nārada said:

86-96. Speaking like this, she too went to her husband's world, O best king. With that same husband she rejoiced in Alakā for a long time. Then all those—grandfather etc.—got into the aeroplanes along with their wives and went to heaven. The best brāhmaṇa went from that holy place to his father's hermitage. And he described to his father the full account. He also went along with his family to Madhuvana and prepared a hut of leaves near Viśrānti. The best sage, bathing three times (a day) at the holy place called Viśrānti, did not even long for Viṣṇu's world. O king, once, while bathing in the water he wondered: 'When shall I see Viṣṇu?' O king, when the excellent sage was wondering like this, Viṣṇu, seated on the king of birds, hastily came (there). He came along with Lakṣmī (close) to his chest; he had four arms. The complexion of his body was like a fresh cloud. He was covered with a garment with the colour of lightning. His large chest was shining with the Kaustubha (jewel). He held a conch, a disc and a lotus. His neck shone with a garland of wood-flowers. His earrings had the shape of crocodiles. His eyes resembled the blooming lotus-flowers. His hands were tawny, and feet had good soles. Covering the directions with the mass (of lustre) like that of the moon, he spoke to the best brāhmaṇa, illumining him with his lustre:

The lord said:

97-99. O best brāhmaṇa, this is the meritorious place known as Viśrānta, and sacred to me. It gives all desired objects on one's bathing in it. Today at the time of your bath you longed for my sight. I have presented it, difficult to be obtained by

gods, to you. O brāhmaṇa, give up this human body. Take up a divine one. Mounting on the lord of birds, come to my place along with me.

Nārada said:

100. O king, having heard these words of the lord of Lakṣmī, the chief of sages, bowing down, praised him (by remaining) in the water only.

The sage said:

101-107. O lord of Lakṣmī, your beautiful lotus-like feet have lovely lotuses offered to them. They destroy the torment of the mundane existence and are saluted by gods. O lord, those beings that are deluded by your Māyā here, can never be liberated without your grace. O lord, due to their resorting to holy places, and their company with the good, devotion (for you) in (these) men is produced due to your grace. O Viṣṇu, he who, having heard the narration of your merits uttered (i.e. made) by many good people and destroying all sins, repeats it, would not fall into the cavity of a mother's womb. O lord of Lakṣmī, the mind of your man (i.e. devotee), (though) fallen into the great going (of the mundane existence) and covered with dust (i.e. passion), does not, like an excellent gem, give up its purity. The man who having horripilation on his body falls (prostrate) like a staff at your lotus-like feet, takes his family to your place, longed for by all meditating saints. O lord, this very soul, deluded by your Māyā roams along all paths, (but) by means of the glances of your charming eyes, crosses the ocean in the form of the world.

Nārada said:

108-111. Praising Viṣṇu like this, the best sage, saying, 'Victory to you', fell at his feet (prostrating himself) like a staff. Lakṣmī's lord, raised the best sage fallen at his feet like a staff, and the universal Soul put him and (the members of) his family on Garuḍa and went to Vaikuṇṭha. O Śibi, I have told you the greatness, destroying all sins, of Madhuvana, O king. What else do you desire to hear? A man who listens to this (account) is freed from all sins.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED FIFTEEN

Budha Infuriated and Appeased

Saubhari said:

1. O Yudhiṣṭhira, having heard these auspicious words of Nārada, modest Śibi Auśīnara said to him:

Śibi said:

2-4. O sage, from your mouth (i.e. from you) I have heard about the greatness of Madhuvana; but there is some doubt in my mind. How was he, of a pious mind, who liberated all his kinsmen, the son of a wanton woman, in two existences? O revered one, tell this. You virtually know everything—the past, the present, and the future also, O Nārada.

Nārada said:

5-9. Once all sages gathered at Haridvāra on the tenth of the bright half of Jyeṣṭha connected with all festivals. There they having duly bathed and performed their (respective) auspicious rites, rested on the surface of Himālaya with their hearts at ease. Into the company of the sages, there came Budha, Tārā's son, full of excessive handsomeness and, as it were, another Cupid embodied. Seeing him coming all the sages got up. Saluted by him with his head (bent down), they again sat down. Seeing the regard shown to Budha by the pre-eminent sages, the sage's son thus asked his father, O lord:

The sage's son said:

10. O father, who is this that has come (here), who is another Cupid in handsomeness and very much respected by sages like Vyāsa?

Nārada said:

11. The pious, best sage, having heard these words of his son, said to him who had insisted (on knowing who Budha was):

The father said:

12. This is the intelligent, great son of Bṛhaspati, the pre-

ceptor of gods, and born of Tārā, and the perpetuator of the family of the Moon.

The son said:

13-15. O father, how have you spoken irrelevant words? How is he the son of Bṛhaspati as well as the perpetuator of the family of the Moon? O father, the Moon was born of Anasūyā from the chief of the sages, viz. Atri. How can this son of Bṛhaspati perpetuate his family? O father, this is a great doubt lurking in my mind. O best brāhmaṇa, remove that doubt of your child who is confused.

The father said:

16-24. O dear one, formerly Bṛhaspati's glorious wife named Tārā was forcibly kidnapped by the powerful Candra (i.e. the Moon). Kidnapping Bṛhaspati's wife the Moon took her to his house and dallied with her for a long time. O dear one, after some time she conceived. Then Bṛhaspati appealed (to Candra to return) his wife. Candra too, overcome by pride and puffed up by his power, did not give her (back). Then, O dear one, Bṛhaspati, getting ready along with gods like Indra, started fighting with the powerful Candra. To help Candra Śukra then came there to the battle that was commenced with the demons. Then a great war for Tārā took place. All people will look upon (that battle called) Tārakāmaya as important. In that very terrible war (both) gods and demons were killed. O dear one, no one was victorious or defeated. Then Brahmā came there, and stopping that fierce battle, gave, after admonishing the Moon, Tārā to Bṛhaspati. Bṛhaspati, seeing Tārā to be pregnant, was angry, and in the presence of Brahmā (said to) Tārā in the gathering of the gods and demons:

Bṛhaspati said:

25. O Tārā of unsteady eyes, listen to my words. Whose child do you bear—of Candra or of me?

The father said:

26-27. O dear one, when that beautiful (Tārā) who was abashed and was thus repeatedly asked, did not say anything to

him, then he (i.e. Budha), who was born (of her) and was angry, said to his mother when the gods and demons were looking on (i.e. in the presence of the gods and the demons).

Budha said:

28. Why do you not, giving up your sense of shame, declare my father? See the power of my curse.

The father said:

29-32. When, speaking like this, he was on the point of cursing her after taking water, she gently said: "Candra is your father." When the chaste lady spoke like this, Candra gladly took this Budha, his own son, and went home. Bṛhaspati also took that Tārā and went home. Brahmā, (other) gods, and demons also went home. I have told you all this that you had asked me as to how he, born of Bṛhaspati's wife, perpetuates Candra's line.

Nārada said:

33-34. Hearing these words of his father, the sage's son laughed loudly and said to his father: "This is the son of a wanton lady, born in adultery."

The father said to the son:

O son, don't speak (like) this. He, knowing (what is going on in) the heart of every being will, understanding your words, curse you.

Nārada said:

35. O king, when the sage had spoken like this, the son of Candra understood what he had said, and while all the sages were listening, he said:

Budha said:

36-46. O best sages, may you listen to my words; and think whether they are good or bad. Do not delay. To see you who know the truth, I have come here. I have not in the least offended anyone. (Then) why do the infatuated ones insult me through jealousy? I long to see you to make my life fruitful. It is the very nature of the wicked that they, like the cuckoos with sweet notes,

sometimes upset the good though innocent. The wicked do not abandon their wicked nature even in the company of the good, as the ocean becomes saline even in the company of the water of Gaṅgā. Oh! (see) the wickedness of the hunter that he kills the deer leading life like sages, moving in the forest, and knowing their own songs(?). What offence have the fish done to the wicked fishermen that they kill them moving in the water at a sacred place? It is their very nature. The good also do not give up their nature in the company of the wicked, as the sandal trees, though surrounded by serpents, do not abandon their coolness. The good dance (with joy) even at the prosperity of their enemy. Then what to say of (the prosperity of) one belonging to their own party? The best sages are eager as the peacocks are (at the sight) of a cloud. The good sustain even their bodies for the good of others, as my father bears the digits for the sake of manes, gods and men. To the good the continual rise (of others) causes joy, as the cool rays of my father (the Moon) cause joy to the white water lilies.

Nārada said:

47-51. Angrily speaking these words, Budha cursed that sage's son: "You too quickly become, like me, a son born in adultery on the earth." Having heard the curse given by Budha, the father made his son fall at his (i.e. Budha's) feet, saying, "(Please) forgive (him)". And he said, "This boy does not know your grandeur. It is not proper for (persons) like you to be angry with this boy. Forgiveness is the nature of a good man who is angry for some reason, as coolness in the nature of water heated by fire. Therefore, having forgiven him quickly favour this child having no discrimination, for forgiveness is the essence of the good."

Nārada said:

52. (Budha,) the son of Candra, thus addressed by him, gave up his anger, and with a cool mind favoured him.

Budha said:

53-58. O sage, this your son after being born in adultery on

the earth, will obtain the perpetual place after a sacred thread is given to him (i.e. after his thread-ceremony).

O best king, due to the curse of Budha the sage's son obtained birth as a son born in adultery, and liberated his dead ancestors. Having heard this purifying greatness of Madhuvana, a man gets the entire fruit of a horse-sacrifice. The mind of those men who keep in it the excellent significance of this greatness, is not overpowered by objects of senses. There is no doubt that those highly intelligent ones who will recite and listen to this (description of the) greatness will go, after casting their body, to Viṣṇu's world. I have described to you this ceaselessly pure account of Madhuvana, which delights the lord of Lakṣmī, which promptly cuts off the mass of blemishes due to Kali, which is the cause of warding off the senses going astray (and of leading to) the pious form (of Viṣṇu).

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED SIXTEEN

The Greatness of Badarikāśrama

Nārada said:

1-12. O king, this Badarikāśrama is situated in the region of just eleven dhanus (i.e. forty-four hastas) from this Madhuvana. To you I shall describe the wonderful greatness of this excellent holy place. One listening to it is free from fear. O king, there was in Magadha a truthful, restrained brāhmaṇa named Devadāsa, who was, as it were, another Dharma. Proficient in all lores he was, as it were, another Bṛhaspati. Like Prahlāda, the king of demons, he pleased Viṣṇu. Though he had a wife, he had conquered, like Śiva, Cupid. Like the sage Viśvāmitra he was always engaged in good acts. He was honoured in the house of Magadha's lord, as Droṇa in Kuru's house. Like Bali, lord of demons, he was disposed to giving gifts to worthy recipients. His wife by name Uttamā was excellent with virtues like Lakṣmī. She was engaged in serving her husband like Janaka's daughter (Sītā). He had one intelligent son named Aṅgada; and he had

one daughter Valayā by name, having excellent marks. Of them the son was elder, the daughter was younger, O king. The best brāhmaṇa got them married in due course. O king, that daughter, endowed with auspicious marks, who was married, went to her father-in-law's house after some time. The very intelligent Aṅgada who knew all holy texts and who was adorned with the splendour of youth, bore the burden (i.e. the responsibility) of the household. Once that best brāhmaṇa, seeing his son to be capable of managing the duties, said to his wife, O best king:

Devadāsa said:

13-21. O good lady, listen to my words proper for this time; (and) then quickly do what is fit, O good one. This old age has come. Causing the limbs to tremble as a storm causes to tremble a ripe fruit, it will cause the body to fall. O you of a good vow, it will also make dull the brightness of the eyes, as the morning time makes dull the brightness of the stars along with the moon. Like an iron fetter this old age will lessen the speed of the stumbling feet at every step. Therefore, O auspicious one, as long as this old age does not become advanced, we should quickly do what is good to us. O fortunate one, a house, sons, friends, brothers, parents are perishable. So also is wealth etc. A wise man is not attached to them. Therefore, I, with my senses controlled, will wander, in the manner of an anchorite, about all holy places and will see Viṣṇu. Then, O auspicious one, taking to renunciation at an excellent holy place, I shall cast my body at the end of the fructification of my karmas. If thus I would be free from life, salvation would be (possible) for me who have properly placed my mind at the lotus-like feet of Lakṣmī's lord.

Uttamā said:

22-25. What man or woman (except one) having no sense would take delight in the perishable mundane existence, leaving Viṣṇu (i.e. and leave Viṣṇu), the perpetual abode? Therefore, O lord of my life, take me, serving your lotus-like feet with you, and quickly lift me up from the ocean of the worldly existence. This (our) glorious son Aṅgada has become capable of sustaining the burden of the household. This auspicious daughter-in-law will help him. That foolish man or woman, who, when his or her son

is capable (of looking after the household), would not be detached, is deprived of bliss.

Nārada said:

26. Having thus talked to each other, that couple called their son Aṅgada on the same day and told him:

The couple said:

27-33. O Aṅgada, know us to have our limbs drooping due to the appearance of old age. At some holy place we shall strive for our spiritual good. Devoutly worshipping Viṣṇu is said to be the highest good. For that only the desireless good people strive on the earth. They who have no attachment for objects of senses, who look equally upon all beings, who are neither delighted nor dejected due to pleasure or pain, are alone the good men, serving the feet of Viṣṇu. By merely seeing them a man is blessed. A wise man, eager to see him (i.e. Viṣṇu), and wandering about the holy places, would see him by good luck. Therefore, O Aṅgada, having placed on your two long arms the burden of (maintaining) the family, allow us to go on a pilgrimage. O son, if, in course of our pilgrimage, we may see a good man, then we would be blessed.

Nārada said:

34-36. Thus addressed by the parents, the son spoke good words: "You have told this to be the emancipation of the entire family. Quickly order me what beneficial thing to you I should do. I always obey the orders of you whose feet are respectable (to me). Take with you the excellent wealth stored by you for giving gifts at holy places. So also take me with you as a servant to serve you."

Nārada said:

37-41a. Speaking like this, and taking money (with him) he went with them for a couple of krośas; and somehow sent back by them, he came home. They took some money with them, and thinking, 'May Viṣṇu come to us' lived there for three days, eating bulbs, roots and fruits. O king, when the couple set off from that place, they met a siddha on their way.

Saluted by both of them with their heads (bent down) he sat down. When the chief of siddhas was seated, they asked him thus: "Tell (us) who you are, wherefrom you have come, what you desire to do".

The siddha said:

41b-46. O best ascetic, I am a siddha. My house is at Kalpagrāma. I have come from Indraprastha. There I saw a great wonder. There is the siddha Kapila resembling Viṣṇu in merits. Learning Sāṁkhya from him I lived in his hermitage. Once my celebrated teacher, Kapila, went from his hermitage to the very holy (place) called Badarī, to bathe in the water of Yamunā. There one wild buffalo, oppressed by thirst, entered the water of Yamunā, and having drunk it, recollected his former existence. The wild buffalo, having recollected his past deeds, quickly came out of the water and saluted (my) teacher, Kapila; and when I was listening, the buffalo spoke with a human voice, which I (shall) tell you today. Listen to it, (which is) very wonderful.

The buffalo said:

47-48. O you Kapila, O you who are a portion of Viṣṇu, O you lord of the siddhas, tell me who have bowed to you, what the name of this great holy place is. Due to the touch of the water of this excellent holy place, I got (the recollection) of my deeds in the past existence, O illustrious one.

The siddha said:

49. Having heard these words of the buffalo, the great sage, though he knew his account, laughed and said these words:

Kapila said:

50. O best of buffaloes, who were you in your former existence? What deed did you do then, due to which you obtained (i.e. were born in) the stock of the buffalo?

The buffalo said:

51-61. O best sage, listen to the account of my former existence. Formerly I was a king, the mighty chief of Kaliṅga.

Deluded by passion I did not know (i.e. discriminate between) my wife and that of another. I took away the wealth of sinless merchants of good conduct. O king(?), I, being fearless, wandered at night in the city to dally with beautiful wives of others. I, deluded by Cupid, at night lived in that house in which I saw a beautiful woman, as an elephant lives in a field. Sporting there fearlessly, and snatching wealth from that house, I returned to my house after a few days. By day I seated in my assembly made two city-lads fight a base duel in front of me. Regarding the boy who put down (the other boy) as rich, I forcibly took the wealth, little or much, of his father. Saying, "This one due to his cowardice is not fit to live in my city", I killed him who was defeated, O sage. The citizens seeing the king to have begun behaving like this, abandoned the city, and went to another country. Durvāsas, the great sage born of Rudra, while roaming over the earth once came to my city. Then all citizens, gathering together approached him. Saluting him, they spoke to him these words acquainting him with their misery:

The citizens said:

62-71. O son of Atri, O best sage, O treasure of pity, favour us. Turn to piety this king, engrossed in doing unrighteous deeds. Due to the dawn of our good fortune you have come (here). Rescue us like a raft from this ocean of misery due to the king who is transgressing its limits. O best sage, the greedy one took away our wealth. The passionate one spoilt chaste and innocent ladies. Many children aged about ten years were killed by him. O great sage, this king is the store of innumerable faults.

The buffalo said:

Having heard these words of the citizens, that sage, the son of Atri, thinking, 'He must be punished', came to my assembly. Seeing the naked sage coming, I stopped him through my servants, saying, "He is not fit to be seen." I many times ordered my servants: "Stop him whose figure is like that of a buffalo, with his entire body smeared with dust." Then the servants quickly went to stop him. Just by means of a 'hum' sound the sage reduced all of them to ash, as you did Sagara's sons, protecting the sacrificial horse of their father. Seeing the servants to

be completely reduced to ash, I quickly got up and was about to enter my house. The best sage, addressing me as "O sinner", cursed me:

72-77. "Now become a buffalo in a great forest." Thus cursed by him, I gave up the royal body; I became a buffalo in a great forest in the Maru country, O sage. O best sage, I lived there for a long time. Hear due to which religious merit I have come here. I had got constructed many reservoirs of water, wells, and tanks. I had (also) planted many mango trees on (the sides of) the path. O god, due to that religious merit, I did not fall into a hell. And I got the contact of the water of this holy place. I have thus told you about the righteous and unrighteous deeds in my former birth, due to which I reached this holy place, and due to which I had reached the buffalo's stock. Due to the touch of the water of this excellent place, I remembered my former existence. O sage, tell me how I shall be free from this miserable stock.

Kapila said:

78. This holy place of Lakṣmī's lord called Badarī is very meritorious. Bathe here, you will quickly obtain what is in your mind.

The siddha said:

79-80. O great sage, having heard these words of the king, he, desiring heaven, entered (the water of) the holy place to bathe. When, having bathed there with a desire (to go) to heaven, he came to the bank from the water, Indra came there just at that moment from heaven.

Indra said:

81. O lord of Kaliṅga, give up your body of the buffalo. Receiving a divine body come to my heaven. You bathed (here) with a desire to (reach) heaven; you have secured that abode of gods.

The siddha said:

82-83. Thus addressed by him, he then abandoned his body of buffalo, and securing a divine body, he mounted upon the lord of elephants. Having mounted upon the lord of elephants, and remaining in the air for a moment, and saluting the god with his head bent down, he praised the sage Kapila.

The Kaliṅga-king said:

84-92. O highest lord, salutation to you, the cause of absolute knowledge, the bridge to all Vedic sciences, and an enemy of those who oppose them. The flow of the Sāṁkhya (principles) causing the knowledge of the absolute truth among the human beings whose minds are overpowered by illusion, is due to you, O lord. O sage, you punish and throw into stocks of lower animals those who give up what is laid down in the Vedas and behave as they like. All regents of quarters like Indra are under your control. Afraid of you, the chastiser, they do what you desire. You, the soul of all, caused the gods to incarnate in each former yuga to destroy those opposing the practices laid down in the three Vedas. O lord, those enemies of gods who were killed by you, gave up their sorrowful bodies and reached Viṣṇu's heaven. O lord of the world, order me to go to heaven. Also favour Indra, with your nectar-like glances, who is bowing to you. O lord of gods, by the favour of you and (the holy place) called Badarī, I have given up my miserable body, and have got a virtuous body. O you treasure of grace, by your favour, I am, after mounting upon the lord of elephants, going to heaven willingly.

The siddha said:

93-96. Thus praising Kapila, the lord of gods, and saluting his feet, the Kaliṅga-king went to heaven. O brāhmaṇa, I, attending upon my preceptor, saw this wonder and also liberation from sin at Badarikāśrama. In the three worlds there is no better holy place giving all (desired) objects. If you desire the highest good, go there with your wife. O brāhmaṇa, to take my old father desiring salvation (and) having no other yearning to Badarī, I am going home.

Nārada said:

97-101. O king, after having narrated the greatness of this excellent holy place called Badarī, the siddha went home. Then after some time that brāhmaṇa (Devadāsa) along with his wife, visiting (various) holy places, reached Indraprastha where the two were taken to his own abode by him (i.e. Vāsudeva) (appearing) in his own body (*corrupt reading*). The siddha also, having quickly brought his father from his house, bathed him,

desiring salvation, there only at that excellent holy place. The old father of that siddha, saluted by gods, was also taken to his own abode by Śrī Viṣṇu. This (holy place) called Badarī, is in Indraprastha. The lord would give all the objects desired by the minds of those bathing here. O king of a modest mind, I have described to you its holy greatness. Having heard it, a man will never fall into a mother's womb (i.e. he will bever be reborn).

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED SEVENTEEN

The Greatness of Haridvāra

The king said:

1-5. O good one, you have described to me the greatness of Badarī, having heard which my mind has become pure, O sage. O best sage, this excellent, wonderful greatness of Śakraprastha gives all the four goals of human life. O Nārada, there is no other holy place than this, which is the best, which gives salvation even to lower animals, which destroys sins just when it is seen. O Nārada, from you, giving delight, I really desire to hear about the greatness of Haridvāra which is in it. O sage, by the description of this holy place situated in Śakraprastha, emancipate me who am a poor person due to wanton deeds indulged in because of ignorance.

Nārada said:

6-19. O illustrious one, listen. I shall describe to you the greatness of Haridvāra, giving the fruit of a horse-sacrifice. I shall tell you today how a sinful cāṇḍāla went to heaven. O lord, listen to it attentively. In Dharmakṣetra Kurukṣetra there lived, outside the city, a sinful cāṇḍāla known as Kāliṅga. He cheated the citizens' boys, five or six years old, forcibly took them to a forest, and killed them there, O king. Having killed them, the mean one took away silver, golden ornaments, and jewels etc. from their bodies. At night he entered the houses of the good to snatch away wealth. Aiming at the wealth of travellers, he killed

them in a lonely forest. Once, on the day of a solar eclipse, people desiring to make various presents came to Kurukṣetra from many quarters, O king. O king, having, on that solar eclipse day, duly bathed there, and having duly given presents, the people went home. One, best among merchants, having much wealth, proceeded towards his house after all men. He, seated on a horse, had twenty foot-soldiers in front of him. That great sinner Kāliṅga proceeded after him for (snatching) his wealth. After having traversed (the distance of) a few camps, the mean man, the cāṇḍāla could not wait (as) he did not get an opportunity to rob his wealth. Even with force he was unable to seize his wealth. The merchant was accompanied by twenty men, while he was alone. O king, the sinful (cāṇḍāla) came for (snatching) the merchant's wealth. At night he entered his camp to take away his wealth. But one of the merchant's men keeping a watch, noticed the sinner while entering.

20-25. Seeing him about to give a blow, the man keeping the watch, even while lying, seized him by both his feet, O king. The man, keeping the watch, seizing his feet, and awakening other people, was struck by the thief just with his hand. Other people, hearing (the sound) seized him who was running away. Again striking him who had seized him, he ran away. O king, one of the (merchant's) servants having a bow, struck the mean one who was quickly running, from a distance only. As soon as he was struck by the arrow, he quickly gave up his life. The thief killed two followers of the merchant, O king. The three, getting into excellent vehicles brought by the attendants, remained in the sky, and spoke these words to the merchant.

Kāliṅga and the merchant's servants said:

26-27. O chief merchant, O good one, this Haridvāra is an excellent holy place in Indraprastha which is propitious even to sinners. O merchant, we three who died at this excellent holy place, will now go to heaven. Good luck to you.

Śrī Nārada said:

28-30. O Śibi, speaking like this the three went to heaven, the place of those who do good deeds and where many things of enjoyment are obtained according to (one's) desire. O king,

when the night had passed, the merchant burnt the dead bodies of his two servants and dropped their bones here. O king, when the bones were being dropped at this holy place, the two servants came back here from heaven, and said these words to the merchant:

The two servants said:

31-36. O chief of the merchants, O good one, due to death at this holy place on the earth, even sinful beings undoubtedly go to heaven. O merchant, if the bones of a being who dies on a dry land, fall into the water of his holy place, he would stay in Satyaloka. Due to the bones of us who died on a dry land being dropped in the water (of this holy place) we have reached Brahmā's world, and will stay here as long as Brahmā lives (here). Since the bones of the thief who died on a dry ground did not fall in the water of this holy place, he went to heaven, O king. Finding out his body also quickly drop it into (the water of) this place, so that, O best god, he too will obtain our state. Good men should always oblige others. They should never mind even a very bad turn done by the bad.

Nārada said:

37-49. Speaking like this the two illustrious ones went to Viṣṇu's city(?) due to their bones being dropped into the water of the holy place of Haridvāra. O illustrious one, the merchant looked for the thief's body to burn it; but, O king, he did not find it. Again returning to that crest-jewel of all holy places, viz. Haridvāra, O great king, he bathed there only with the desire: 'Having produced good sons, having pleased brāhmaṇas and my kinsmen by (giving them) wealth earned righteously, and having propitiated Viṣṇu by serving him, and having died at you (i.e. at this holy place) only, I shall go to Viṣṇu's abode. O lord of the holy places, salutation to you. You must do this.' With this desire, O king, the merchant bathed with all his servants at that holy place giving all desired objects, and then went home. Having gone there the intelligent one produced sons on his wife and pleased his kinsmen by (giving them) wealth earned righteously. O king, having propitiated Lakṣmī's lord with great devotion, he died at this holy place, due to which he would reach

Vaikuṇṭha. O king, I have thus described to you the greatness of this holy place Haridvāra. Listen to the fruit (obtained) by listening to it. A man would obtain that fruit which he would obtain by giving a droṇa (approximately 30 kilograms) of sesamum seeds (to a brāhmaṇa) in Māgha. The fruit due to listening to (the account of) the greatness of this (holy place) is the same as by giving gopīcandana, and eating from brahma-leaves(?). The same fruit as is obtained on keeping awake in the last watch of the Prabodhinī Ekādaśī would be obtained by listening to (the account of) the greatness of this holy place. There is no other holy place on the earth, giving the fruit of the four goals of human life, like this Haridvāra in Indraprastha.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED EIGHTEEN

The Greatness of Puṣkara: Puṇḍarīka's Story

Nārada said:

1-2. O illustrious one, listen to the very wonderful greatness, causing propitiousness, of the holy place Puṣkara, situated here. Viṣṇu, the lord of all gods, being pleased due to the grace of that holy place would live in Puṇḍarīka's house for a month. His younger brother, though engaged in committing sins, obtained salvation here only.

Śibi said:

3-5. Who is that righteous Puṇḍarīka? What act did he do, due to which the lord, being pleased, lived in his house? O sage, tell me all that how his sinful younger brother reached Śrī Hari's place due to the grace of this holy place. Listening to its greatness I am not being satisfied.

Nārada said:

6-9. In the Vidarbha-city, there lived a brāhmaṇa called Mālava, who was very famous, who knew the Vedas, who was tranquil, learned and highly devoted to Viṣṇu, who worshipped

deities, sages, dead ancestors, and fed beings and men. He was not addicted to the objects of senses, and was free from greed and folly. Once that illustrious one went to bathe to the very holy Godāvarī, when Jupiter had entered the Zodiacal sign Leo. To offer (to brāhmaṇas) there he took ten thousand palas of gold from his house. The righteous one going along the way thought in his mind:

Mālava said (to himself):

10-16. From my house I have taken ten thousand palas of gold to be given (to brāhmaṇas). They are not to be given to anyone. They are to be given to a respectable good man. That which is given at the proper place and time to a worthy brāhmaṇa who has not rendered any service (to the giver), would be inexhaustible. The righteous sage, himself living by gleaning corn, having given what was obtained by gleaning corn to Durvāsas, gave up his own position, and went to the highest one. King Bali, the lord of the demons, knowing Vāmana to be a worthy recipient, gave him, even his enemy, the three worlds earned with his own arms (i.e. power). Therefore, to please Viṣṇu, I should give my wealth, earned righteously, to a worthy recipient. I should not long for its fruit. My sister's son, the pious Puṇḍarīka, who is the crest-jewel of all worthy recipients, will come when called from (the city) called Gaja. Half of the wealth brought by me I shall give to that worthy recipient, my sister's son. The remaining I shall duly give to learned brāhmaṇas.

Nārada said:

17-21. O king, then that best, pious brāhmaṇa Mālava, reached after a few days the holy Godāvarī. His sister's son, Puṇḍarīka, the pious one, joined him. O king, he had come there before that Mālava. Having duly bathed there, on the day when (the Sun) entered Leo, he gave half of his wealth to Puṇḍarīka, saying, "May Viṣṇu be pleased with me." That pious Puṇḍarīka also, having bathed in the water of Godāvarī, gladly gave the fourth part of his wealth to learned brāhmaṇas. He (i.e. Mālava), having bathed there and given gifts according to his capacity, spoke to his sister's son who was going home, O king:

Mālava said:

22-27. Tell (i.e. convey) my salutation to the elders and blessings to the younger, since, our union here has become (i.e. proved) to be momentary. Similarly our union with our sons, wife is momentary. Therefore, that wise man who gets detached from the mundane existence, where the union is momentary, would certainly be fit for Viṣṇu's favour. Due to viṣṇu's grace, a being would be interested in good company. Then in him is produced a desire to hear about Viṣṇu's playful acts. Having heard Viṣṇu's playful acts narrated by the good, he with a strong desire narrates them and then merely remembers Viṣṇu. Then he has love for serving Viṣṇu's feet. Then a man quickly crosses (the mundane existence) as a great ocean with a raft. For this reason, the good, the wise exert in deeds. O pious one, therefore, you also exert.

Nārada said:

28-34. Thus speaking, he, with his face bedewed with tears, dismissed his sister's son, with his eyes full of tears and went (home). The pious Puṇḍarīka also proceeded to his house. O king, after a few days, he came to this auspicious place. He saw his younger brother called Bharata, fallen on the ground, breathing, and smeared with blood flowing out of his wounds. Weeping loudly, he asked his brother: "Due to what are you reduced to this condition? For what purpose have you come here from (your) house?" O lord of kings, when Puṇḍarīka was asking like this Bharata afflicted by great pain, instantly died. O king, while men and his preceptor were watching, a wonderful vehicle with attendants descended from the sky. Having got into it, that Bharata, though he had committed sins, became one of a divine body, saluted his elder brother, and said these words to him:

Bharata said:

35-44a. O very intelligent Puṇḍarīka, due to the grace of this holy place, Puṣkara, I, though a sinner, secured a position in heaven. O brother, though you know my fierce deed, yet I shall today tell it (again), (because) some (part of it) is unknown to you. I dallied with the prostitute Prabhāvatī, and spent much

money on liquor in her house. I lost in gambling whatever wealth I had earned by stealing. I ate the remnants of the offering to Śiva on Śivarātri, for which you blamed a brāhmaṇa named Jebuka. O Puṇḍarīka, you know this deed which I did. O brother, you do not know the deed which I did when you went to Godāvarī. I shall tell you that also. When you had left, and a fortnight had passed, I learnt from people words difficult to be borne by a man, viz. that the maternal uncle had called Puṇḍarīka to give him wealth. 'Having killed Puṇḍarīka, my uterine brother, I shall snatch away the wealth taken by him which (our) maternal uncle has given him; and with that great wealth I shall please Prabhāvatī. I shall play with a gamester and those who know it (i.e. gambling).'

44b-47. Thinking like this I remained blocking your way, to kill you and to take much wealth from you, O you very intelligent one. When the wealth was (to be) taken possession of (by me), O brother, from somewhere a caravan of merchants came, where I had slept at night, O very intelligent one. Then at night a thief entered the place full of the men of the caravan to snatch the wealth of the merchants. When the thief, after having taken some wealth, ran away the servants, crying, suddenly ran after him.

The servants said:

48. Catch him, catch him. He is a thief going away hurriedly after having snatched much wealth in the midst of us (though) many.

Bharata said:

49-54. O brother, having heard these words of them, I suddenly ran after him in front of them with a desire to seize whatever he had snatched. Then the merchants' servants with swords in their hands, taking me to be his protector, and having a sword in my hand, struck me quickly. I, a sinner, killed an excellent brāhmaṇa among them (though he was) saying, 'I am a brāhmaṇa', with a sharp-edged sword. The merchants' servants killed me with edges of swords (i.e. sharp-edged swords). In the morning the merchants went to the kingdom where they wanted to go. Then you came here and saw me breathing and with my body smeared with blood flowing (from the wounds),

and dead due to unconsciousness caused by the injury. O brother, I have thus told you what for I had come here, and I have also told you how I met with a premature death.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED NINETEEN

The Greatness of Puṣkara; Puṇḍarīka Attains Absorption into Viṣṇu

Nārada said:

1. Hearing these words of him, the noble-minded Puṇḍarīka spoke to his brother, when his companions were listening:

Puṇḍarīka said:

2. O Bharata, tell me if you know due to which religious merit you died at this holy place. Your sin is quite well-known.

Bharata said:

3-7. O Puṇḍarīka, listen. I am telling you which religious merit I did in this existence, which gave (i.e. brought) me (to) this holy place. Once, after having snatched wealth, I, while coming back to my house, saw a dead, helpless child of someone in the market. Putting it on my head, taking it to the auspicious bank of Gaṅgā and adorning it with a garment etc. I performed his funeral rites like burning his body. I spent all the wealth I had obtained through gambling. Due to that religious merit I secured (i.e. I reached) this holy place, bringing auspiciousness. Perform funeral rites of my body after burning it.

Śrī Nārada said:

8-16. O king, when the funeral rites were performed, even the sinful Bharata went to heaven by the favour of this holy place. Now listen as to how Viṣṇu, Hari, lived for a month in Puṇḍarīka's house by the favour of this holy place. The pious one seeing that Bharata got felicity at this holy place, thought in

his mind that this holy place gives desired objects. That wise Puṇḍarīka bathed at this holy place with this desire: 'May Viṣṇu in his original form live in my house during the month of Māgha'. Having bathed with this desire he went home. O best king, Puṇḍarīka told his brothers about the death of Bharata at this holy place giving all (desired) objects. They too, with their minds covered by Māyā, having heard it, lamented. Then Puṇḍarīka, doing his (usual) rites at home, and being highly delighted, lived in his house thinking that Viṣṇu would come due to his penance. On the full-moon day of Pauṣa he celebrated a great festival, thinking that Hari would certainly come to his house the next day. He adorned his house by sprinkling it with sandal mixed with water, smearing it with cow-dung, and by arranging the quadrangle with pearls. He fed two hundred brāhmaṇas with various kinds of food. He gratified them with profuse presents.

17-21. Singing at night with those skilled in playing on various musical instruments and singing sweet songs, he kept awake with his kinsmen. In the morning having dismissed all those singers etc., he with his mind longing for Viṣṇu's arrival sat in his house. Then sending back his vehicle from the vicinity of his (i.e. Puṇḍarīka's) house, he (i.e. Viṣṇu) entered his house to do what was desired by his man. That Puṇḍarīka, having seen that Viṣṇu to have arrived, quickly got up from his seat, and saluted him by (bending down) his head, O king. That pious one, delighted to see Viṣṇu, having worshipped him by offering him materials of worship etc. said to him, seated on a seat:

Puṇḍarīka said:

22-29. You have very clearly done what removes the torment of the mundane existence. O Viṣṇu, you, causing preservation, stay here, till this pure penance would come to an end. Your Vaikuṇṭha, free from all blemishes, exists there only where all your servants, serving (you) live. We have heard from the mouths of the good that, O lord, Viṣṇu lives in that house where your deeds are described. They indeed are the good, in whose speech remains your name, in whose hearts remains your handsome form, and in whose ears remain your virtues. They indeed are the good whose heart (longs) for your service, and on whose heads are the remains of an offering to you. O lord of Lakṣmī, they

alone are the good whose mind (views equally) their enemy and their friend, so also their gain and loss. O lord of Lakṣmī, they alone are the good whose mind is not affected by emotions. The good live where you live; you live where the good live. So knowing (me) to be good live in my house during (the month of) Māgha.

Nārada said:

30. Viṣṇu, having heard these words of that Puṇḍarīka, and brightening the quarters with the lustre of his teeth, said (these) words:

The lord said:

31-33. O you very intelligent one, you are the best among the virtuous men on the earth, since with a desire for my company you bathed at the holy place. O brāhmaṇa, get up. Bathe in the water of Gaṅgā in Māgha. At the end of Māgha, on the full-moon day, I shall bathe you at Puṣkara. All that entire fruit due to bathing in the month of Māgha at Prayāga, would be (obtained) due to bathing (just) on one day at the holy place, Puṣkara.

Nārada said:

34-42a. That best brāhmaṇa, Puṇḍarīka, thus addressed by Viṣṇu, bathed in the water of Gaṅgā, when the sun had slightly risen. Puṇḍarīka actually worshipped the lotus-eyed (Viṣṇu) with tulasī(-leaves), blooming flowers, barley, saffron, sandal, and he waved five lights of camphor before the lord of Lakṣmī, whose body was made fragrant with incenses of agaru. Having fed the lord of the world with four kinds of food, he fanned him lying on a jewelled bed with chowries. He shampooed the feet of the lord of Lakṣmī. He gave him a tāmbūla with camphor. Taking a mirror in his hand the best brāhmaṇa stood in front of Lakṣmī's lord when he was tying the turban. Thus the brāhmaṇa passed the entire month of Māgha in worshipping (Viṣṇu) destroying the mundane existence and living in his house. Then on the full-moon day at the end of Māgha, he saw Garuḍa waiting in front of him, who had come there on merely being remembered by the lord of Lakṣmī. Seeing him, the lotus-eyed (Viṣṇu) said to Puṇḍarīka:

The lord said:

42b-46. O best brāhmaṇa, listen to the words which I am speaking to you. I have given you—viz. that I lived (in your house) for a month—(what was desired by you), when you had by chance gone to the holy place Puṣkara situated in Indraprastha for a bath. O you very intelligent one, today having mounted upon the lord of birds with me go to that Puṣkara (again) which is the crest-jewel of all holy places. O brāhmaṇa, since I am at your disposal, I shall give you, bathing at the place giving the four goals of human life, whatever you desire. Your brother Bharata, though a sinner, desiring heaven got it when he died there. What else can be spoken about him?

Nārada said:

47-52. O lord of kings, having thus spoken to the best brāhmaṇa and putting him on the lord of birds, he came to that best holy place. From Puṇḍarīka's body a flash went out along with his vital breath and reached Viṣṇu's position. O king, Puṇḍarīka, by means of a bath at the holy place Puṣkara, situated in Indraprastha, obtained absorption into the lord. Thus by the solicitation of the holy place, even Viṣṇu happily lived in his house like his relative. Who can describe the greatness of Puṣkara situated in Indraprastha? I have described only a part equal to one fraction of a crore. O king, by devoutly listening to or by reciting the greatness, a man obtains the fruit of a horse-sacrifice.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED TWENTY

The Greatness of Prayāga: Mohinī's Story

Nārada said:

1-4. To you I am describing devoutly the very meritorious greatness of the auspicious Prayāga, the principal among holy places. O king, there was a gandharva (named) Viśvāvasu, well-known in the world. Once he went to Brahmā's assembly on Sumeru to sing. Viśvāvasu saw there the lord of gods resorted to

by all hosts of gods, seated on an excellent seat, O king. O king, near the seat of Brahmā he saw Indraprastha, as if it was another lord of the world, seated on an excellent seat.

5-8. He saw the lord of gods and the chief of holy places waving chowries on the heads of Brahmaprastha and Indraprastha, O king. O king, he also saw there other divine holy places, standing with the palms of their hands joined in obeisance, at a distance from the two. In front of the two he sang an excellent Gāndharva-rāga. Leaving the gods he went to Satyaloka with the holy places. Then, O lord of kings, the intelligent Viśvāvasu, seeing the grandeur of the holy place Indraprastha, spoke these words to Hāhā.

Viśvāvasu said:

9-13. O best of gandharvas, in the world this holy place called Indraprastha is very wonderful among the heaps of (i.e. many) holy places, since he was seated on a seat near that of Brahmā who is the lord of the movable and the immovable, and whose lotus-like feet are saluted by the gods. Even the chief of the holy places standing behind, waved chowries on his head, (thus) becoming his servant. Then what can be said about other holy places? (All) the holy places that are there grant as a fruit (of a visit to them) the three goals of human life; but this holy place Indraprastha grants (all) the four goals. The holy places stationed here are Dhruva in merits. Their great merits cannot be described even by Śeṣa.

Nārada said:

14. O king, the intelligent Viśvāvasu, seeing the grandeur of Indraprastha like this, which was purifying and giving all desired objects, went home.

15-20. As Śakra, lord of Śacī, is the greatest among gods, and Brahmā is superior to him, so is this Prayāga the best of all holy places. Indraprastha is superior even to that, O great king. O king, I shall tell you the account of the prostitute Mohinī, which took place at Prayāga which is seen within it. O king, on the bank of river Narmadā there is the city Māhiṣmatī. In it was a prostitute named Mohinī, who had ample wealth, was endowed with beauty and youth, and skilled in dancing and singing.

She, greedy of wealth, committed many sins. She killed seven brāhmaṇas and many maid servants. She, the sinful one, also many times caused their abortions. In this way she passed her good (i.e. valuable) youth in sinful acts.

21-28. Then after some time old age came to her body. She with her body afflicted by old age and with her desire for sensual objects gone, did not have a longing for young men, nor did they have (any longing) for her, O king. About her wealth, earned sinfully, she did not confide in anyone. She did not give it (to anyone); she did not enjoy it herself; she did not deposit it somewhere. Once, at night, she being awakened, thought like this: 'Whose will this wealth earned sinfully be when I am dead? It will take me to a dreadful hell. The maid servants and their husbands will enjoy that wealth of me. Then now, why should I not make a good use of it?' Thinking like this, she resolved upon doing righteous acts and constructed gardens, tanks, wells, reservoirs of water and temples. Near the city she fixed a place where water is distributed to travellers in summer; and she gave them food (also), O great king. Near her house she put up a guest house for foreigners to stay in. And she also gave them excellent food.

29-37. O king, when that Mohinī was thus engaged in righteous acts, in course of time old age came to her, and sometime she thought: 'Though I have spent much money on righteous acts, yet I still have much more wealth in (the form of) gold, silver etc. I shall voluntarily give it to learned brāhmaṇas.' Thus she thought. Thinking like this Mohinī invited the brāhmaṇas of the city. O king, when they, realising that the acceptance of the wealth from her was fearful, she divided her wealth into two parts. O king, she gave one part to her maid servants and the other to foreigners. She herself became destitute. Knowing that her death was imminent, her maid servants left her, took the wealth, and went (away) as they liked thinking that wealth which would be given by her when she would be free from fever (was already with them). She, after having observed eighteen fasts, was then free from fever, as (a part of the span of) her life was still left, O king. O king, she had one maid named Jaradgavā. Being careful, she actively waited upon her with (i.e. by giving her) salutary diet etc.

38-43. After a few days she was fit to take full diet. With (a sense of) shame she ate in the house of that Jaradgavā. 'Here (i.e. in the world) I have lived happily. Now misery has come to me. I shall not live in poverty.' Thinking like this, she went elsewhere. While she was going to a forest, the thieves of the city, thinking 'This is Mohinī, going after taking wealth', struck her. O king, not finding wealth with her, they left her breathing in that very forest. Then, O king, some anchorite, carrying water from Prayāga in a water-pot came to the forest. Then seeing her fallen with her body wounded by weapons and asking for the water by means of signs made by her hand,

The anchorite said:

44-50. Who are you? Who has wounded your body with sharp weapons? Why have you, all alone, come to this lonely forest? O auspicious one, with a desire to do good this water of Prayāga, situated in Indraprastha, is brought by me due to good luck.

Thus addressed by him, she, unable to speak, opened her mouth to drink water, with the desire, 'May I be a queen'. O king, when this water of Prayāga was dropped into her mouth, that prostitute Mohinī gave up her life. At the time of her departure she longed for the status of a queen. Therefore, she, being born in the house of the lord of Kerala, became due to drinking the water of the holy place, the wife of king Vīravarman endowed with (good) family, (good) character, wealth, prosperity, in the Draviḍa country. The lotus-eyed one had a body yellowish like gold. Therefore, her father named her 'Hemāṅgī'.

51-53. Once that Hemāṅgī, adorned with golden ornaments, went to the house of Kalā, her friend and the minister's daughter. There she was bathed (after being smeared) with barley oil, was fed with various foods, and was seated on an excellent seat. With her braid tied with flowers, and adorned with thin silken garments, and having a tāmbūla in her mouth, she said to Kalā:

Hemāṅgī said:

54. O Kalā, speaking sweetly but indistinctly like a cuckoo, understand my words. Show me the thing which is wonderful in your house.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED TWENTYONE

The Greatness of Prayāga: Hemāṅgī and Vīravarman Go to Vaikuṇṭha

Nārada said:

1-3. O king, that Kalā, thus addressed by the king's wife, got brought a golden box from her treasure, and put it before (her). She said, "O queen, O wife of the great king, this is a very wonderful book. There are pictures in it. Having opened the book a little, see what it contains. By seeing the pictures in it your mind will be delighted."

4-12. Thus addressed by her, the queen got the box opened by her maid and took with her hand the book that was in it. In it she first saw succinctly (the pictures of) the incarnations. Then she saw the globe having an expanse of fifty crores of yojanas. In it she saw a region full of darkness. Between the two stood the Lokāloka mountain, O king. Then she saw the seven islands surrounded by seven seas. So also in them, she saw rivers, mountains and continents, O very wise one. The wife of the king saw this Bhāratakhaṇḍa. She saw the chief rivers like Yamunā, Gaṅgā. O king, the illustrious one saw this auspicious Indraprastha along with Vraja on the bank of Yamunā. O king, the high-minded one seeing in it the holy place fashioned by Brahmā, recollected the act(s) done by her in her former birth. Then silently getting up she, determining, 'I shall not eat (food) till I leave for the holy place', hurriedly went home. Then only, that Hemāṅgī, loving the chief holy place, said to king Vīravarman, dear to her like her own life:

Hemāṅgī said:

13-19. O lord of my life, listen to my righteous words, and carry them out quickly, O illustrious one. (My desire) will be fulfilled. Formerly I was a prostitute. I committed many sins in my youth and in my old age I had a mind to do pious acts. I spent righteously the wealth I had earned sinfully. O king, when I who was penniless, went out of my city and was going in a forest, thieves who were sinful, who were tormented by improper poverty, struck me, with a desire to grab (my) wealth. The

thieves, with their desires frustrated, leaving me, with my body wounded with sharp weapons, and breathing (but) unconscious, there, went (away). Then an anchorite carrying the water of Prayāga situated in Indraprastha, came into that forest. The ascetic seeing me lying in that condition there asked me: "Who are you? Wherefrom (have you come)? Why and by whom were you hit?"

20-24. I then did not say anything, but asked for that holy water. He put it into my mouth, and I abandoned (my) body. Hearing that that water fulfils all desires, I desired, O lord, at the time of the departure of my life: 'May I be (born as) a queen.' Due to the grace of that holy place I became your wife practising acts of a good family and of a very good character. O king, now I desire to see, along with you, that chief holy place Prayāga situated in Indraprastha and giving all desired objects. O king, I have taken this pledge that I shall eat food only when I proceed to that chief holy place, O lord.

The king said:

25. O you of unsteady eyes, how would I know (to be true) what you said? Convince me, O good one; I would do what you said.

Nārada said:

26a. When the king said like this, there was a voice in the sky.

The divine voice said:

26b-27. O king, your wife has spoken the truth. Having gone to the auspicious Prayāga, the best of all holy places situated in Indraprastha, bathe there; you will get whatever you desire.

Nārada said:

28-33. Having heard the words coming from the sky the king prostrated himself on the ground like a staff, and said, "I salute him who spoke those words." Then having called his minister, and having entrusted the kingdom to him, he, getting into an excellent chariot, went with her to the excellent holy place. After a few days the king came here with Hemāṅgī. The king with his wife drank the water at the chief holy place. The

couple bathed there at that auspicious holy place, giving all desired objects, desiring 'May I reach Vaikuṇṭha with this body.' When the couple had just bathed there, the best gods (Brahmā and Viṣṇu) having the swan and the eagle respectively as their vehicles arrived there. Seeing them who had come there, that king Vīravarman, with a concentrated mind, saluted by (bowing) his head, and praised them.

The king said:

34-41. Salutation to you, O best gods, having dark and tawny bodies and wearing garments like gold and red lead. I salute you, having mainly (qualities of) sattva and rajas, the wonderful lords of Vaikuṇṭha and Satyaloka, having four and two hands, and carried by best birds. I salute by (bowing) my head bent through good thoughts, you, giving good liberation and pleasures to men having detachment and attachment, and with your lotus-like feet saluted by gods. O you whose lotus-like feet are saluted by gods, nobody knows your original form, since you are beyond Prakṛti and transcend the mind and speech of man. O you highest soul, that man is blessed who, thinking this world to be transitory, resorts to your lotus-like feet saluted by hosts of sages. This holy place, where your feet are resorted to, is indeed difficult to be reached by men worshipping you, and it gives all desired objects. Yet these two are to be resorted to for salvation, not secured through any other (means). He who resorts to it with any other desire (than salvation) is (indeed) duped. Desiring to conquer all worlds the good, resorting to you and to this place giving salvation, do not long for anything except it.

Nārada said:

42. When having thus praised the lord of gods and the lord of the worlds, the king remained (silent), then that Hemāṅgī spoke, O king:

Hemāṅgī said:

43-46. O lord of Lakṣmī, O you having eyes like lotus petals, O Brahman having a high seat, and venerable to Sarasvatī, I salute you; if you favour me of a mean heart, then (help me to) cross this ocean of the mundane existence. O lord, due to the

grace of this holy place I became a queen. I had your view difficult to be had even by gods. You two know the hearts of all; you have given us the best, which we two had longed for at the time of bathing.

The best gods, thus praised by both, had their faces pleased, and they said to the couple:

Viṣṇu and Brahmā said:

47-48. O Hemāṅgī, you are blessed since you, due to the contact with this holy place, have emancipated your husband whose mind was attached to the pleasures of the kingdom. Such a salvation is difficult to get for kings attached to objects of senses. Your husband has a wife like you due to the grace of this holy place.

Nārada said:

49-53. Speaking like this, and looking at Garuḍa, the best of birds, the two best gods (and the couple) went to Satyaloka, O lord of men. There they (the couple) were all duly honoured by Brahmā, O king. Then they stayed there for some time at the request of him. O king, then with the couple Viṣṇu, mounting on Garuḍa, went to Śrī Vaikuṇṭha. O king, I have thus told you the greatness of the chief holy place, which is meritorious, destroys all sins, leads to success and gives sons. A man who would listen to or read this account daily would go to his desired place. I have told the truth.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED TWENTYTWO

Kāśī, Gokarṇa, Śivakāñcī, Tīrthasaptaka and Bhīmakuṇḍa

Nārada said:

1-8. O king Śibi, listen. I am describing to you the excellent, meritorious greatness of Kāśī giving success and long life. O king, formerly in the auspicious Kṛtayuga there was a tree called

śiṁśapā in Kāśī situated on the slope of Indraprastha. There was a crow that had made its nest on the tree; and below it in the hollow (of the tree) lived a great serpent. Once his wife laid a couple of eggs in the nest and went somewhere. She did not come back to her nest. O king, that crow took care of the couple of eggs; lived high up on that śiṁśapā tree only. Once at night a great storm came and it broke the śiṁśapā tree from its root though strong. Then at the root of the śiṁśapā tree shattered by the storm, the crow and the serpent were crushed and died. The tree, śiṁśapā tree, (the serpent and) the crow etc. had divine bodies, and getting into three aeroplanes, went to Viṣṇu's abode.

Śibi said:

9. O divine sage, due to what religious merit did they reach the city giving salvation? Who were they before that? Tell (me) all that, O Nārada.

Nārada said:

10-14. There was a brāhmaṇa named Śravaṇa in the Kuru-jāṅgala country. His wife was Kuṇḍā by name, and his brother was Kuranṭaka. That Śravaṇa ate, without having bathed (first), sweetmeats. Due to that sin he became (i.e. was born as) a village crow. His brother Kuranṭaka was a strong atheist. He stopped (following) the path laid down by Śrutis and Smṛtis, and censured deities. Due to that fault he became a deadly serpent after his death. Śravaṇa's wife Kuṇḍā shared the sins of both (of them). Therefore, she got the condition of an immobile object (viz. the tree) which was resorted to by both (Śravaṇa and Kuranṭaka). O king, I have told you this that happened in their former existence.

15-20. Hereafter I shall tell you about their religious merit due to which they reached the charming city of the lord of the world, viz. Kāśī, O king. Once they were returning home from another village. Seeing the cow of a traveller fallen into a well and being urged by him they took her out. Hearing what they told, Kuṇḍā said: 'Well (done).' Due to that religious merit they met with death at Kāśī, on the slope of Indraprastha, which is difficult to have, and went up to Vaikuṇṭha. O king, I have told you this excellent greatness of Kāśī. Tell me what else you desire to hear.

Śibi said:

21-22. O sage, you mentioned three holy places of Śiva: Kāśī and Śivakāñcī, and the other (i.e. the third) one, viz. Gokarṇa. O great sage, you have told me the greatness of one viz. Kāśī, Tell me, if there is any, the greatness of Gokarṇa and Śivakāñcī.

Nārada said:

23-30. O king, Gokarṇa is a very purifying holy place of Śiva only. A man dying there would be Śiva; there is no doubt about it. If a being would die there on land, in water or in the air, he after becoming Śiva, shines on the peak of Kailāsa. One dying here at the holy place of Gokarṇa is not born again. Shining like Śiva, one obtains salvation at any time. O king, O lord, O very intelligent one, I shall describe to you the greatness of this Gokarṇa also, which I had heard from Brahmā's mouth. This frontier mountain of a meritorious appearance is seen near Gurutīrtha at a distance of two miles from Prayāga. On it was a very cruel bhilla named Karkaṭa. His wife was Jarā by name. She had killed (her) five husbands. That Jarā prepared a sweetmeat (mixed) with poison to kill Karkaṭa, (her) sixth husband. The noble bhilla heard about it from the mouth of his sister. That very cruel Karkaṭa set about killing that young woman.

31-39a. When the king of the bhillas, with a sword in his hand, came to kill her, she, realising that he was ready to kill her, went (away). Being frightened and desiring (to save) her life she ran to a forest. That Karkaṭa, with a sword in his hand, seized her here at the holy place of Gokarṇa. Having cut off her head with the sword, and having dropped her body into the water of the holy place Gokarṇa, he went to his place. That sinful Jarā also met with death there at Gokarṇa. She became the friend of Pārvatī on the peak of Kailāsa. I have told you this glory of Gokarṇa. I shall describe to you the holy greatness of Śivakāñcī. O lord, the same bliss which I told (is obtained) in Gokarṇa is also obtained in Śivakāñcī situated on the slope of Indraprastha. Here god Śiva, on propitiating Viṣṇu, the lord of all gods, obtained the status of the chief devotee and metaphysical knowledge.

Therefore, we all, the sons of Brahman, always propitiate him, with a desire to get good devotion and knowledge.

39b-48. O king, here the demon Bāṇa, observing a fast, propitiated Maheśvara for a hundred years with a desire to have qualities like him. The god was pleased with him and gave him the status of his attendant. And he himself became forever the protector of his city. O king, this city formerly belonged to the magnanimous Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu, pleased with the penance of Śiva, gave it to him. Here formerly a very wonderful event took place. A brāhmaṇa, a devotee of Śiva, reached Vaikuṇṭha here. O king, there was a religious brāhmaṇa by name Heramba. With his body, mind and words he was always engaged in worshipping Śiva. O king Śibi, once the noble one, Śiva's devotee, while visiting places holy to Śiva, came here to Śivakāñcī. The intelligent one did not leave this charming (holy place). Later he died in its water. There only the attendants of Mahādeva (i.e. Śiva) took the best brāhmaṇa and proceeded to the Kailāsa mountain by his (i.e. Śiva's) order. In the middle came the attendants of Viṣṇu from Vaikuṇṭha. They forcibly set out to take that best brāhmaṇa from them. There was a great battle between the attendants of Viṣṇu and Śiva.

49-56. In that battle none got victory or defeat. Viṣṇu, seated on Garuḍa, came there from Vaikuṇṭha. Śiva, the supporter of the three worlds, seated on his bull, also (came) there from Kailāsa. Then the two looking at each other's face, laughed (i.e. smiled) and only watched the great battle waged by their attendants in the sky. Then Viṣṇu warded his own attendants and those of Śiva off the battle in the sky, and putting the brāhmaṇa on Garuḍa, Viṣṇu went to Śiva's abode, surrounded by Śiva, Śiva's attendants and his own attendants. The glorious one while going along the way was saluted by gods. Led by Śiva he entered his abode, showing the brāhmaṇa the beauty of it. Then from that Kailāsa, Viṣṇu, saluted by Śiva with great devotion went to Vaikuṇṭha. The glorious brāhmaṇa also obtained the sight of Viṣṇu due to the grace of this holy place and enjoyed in the vicinity of Viṣṇu. O king, I have told you this grandeur of Śivakāñcī.

57-64. Listen very attentively to (the holy place) named Tīrthasaptaka. O great king, this holy place gives the fruit of the

four goals of human life (to one who) visits it, comes in its contact, thinks about it or even (merely) remembers it. O king, great sages like Vasiṣṭha stayed there and practised severe penance for the creation. The religious Marīci also bathed here for (getting) a son; and the glorious one obtained an excellent son, viz. Kaśyapa. Atri also pleased here the best gods by his penance, and obtained three sons from them—Soma, Durvāsas and Datta. The pious Aṅgiras also obtained, due to the favour of this holy place, sons. They, the brāhmaṇas, viz. the Āṅgirasas, were born in his family. Pulaha also got a son, Dambholi, of excellent virtues, who was, O king, Agastya in olden times. By bathing in this holy place Pulastya, practising penance, got a son, the glorious Kubera, Śiva's friend. Kratu too had thousands of sons (called) Vālakhilyas.

65-67. Due to the favour of this holy place they were perpetual celibates. Vasiṣṭha too, practising severe penance, got seven sons, Raja and others. O best king, I have described its greatness. O king, there are many other holy places also, like Kapilāśrama, Kedāra, Prabhāsa. O king, their greatness cannot be described even by Ananta even during a million years; then how (can it be described) by (persons) like me?

Saubhari said:

68-71. Having spoken like this, Nārada, the best sage, extolling Viṣṇu's virtues went to Śiva from the sky. O king, Auśīnara Śibi, having heard about the grandeur of Indraprastha from the sage's mouth, regarded himself blessed. The king, having duly bathed there at Indraprastha, and having performed all auspicious rites, went to his city. O lord, I have described to you the greatness of Indraprastha, the holy place purifying people and situated on the bank of Yamunā.

72-77. O best king, in Kali (age), people, void of faith, will not have regard for this Indraprastha, the crest-jewel of all holy places. That fruit which is obtained by listening to the eighteen Purāṇas and Bhārata is produced by (listening to) the greatness of Indraprastha. That fruit which is obtained by means of a lakh of baths at dawn in the month of Māgha would be had by devoutly listening to (the description of) the greatness of this (holy place). O king, he who devoutly listens to (the description of) its

greatness, would gratify his dead ancestors, gods and sages. That fruit which is had by means of the vows like Kṛcchra, Atikṛcchra, Parāka, and Cāndrāyaṇa, would be had by devoutly listening to (the description of) its greatness. O king, that fruit which is due to all sacrifices like the horse-sacrifice would be had by devoutly listening to (the description of) its greatness.

Sūta said:

78-80. King Yudhiṣṭhira having thus heard the greatness of Indraprastha from Śaunaka Saubhari, went to Hastināpura. Then having instructed his brothers led by Duryodhana, he went to the auspicious Indraprastha with a desire to perform a Rājasūya sacrifice. Having brought from Dvārakā, Kṛṣṇa, his family-deity, the king performed the Rājasūya sacrifice.

81-85. Thinking that this holy place could give salvation even to the abusive (Śiśupāla), Kṛṣṇa killed Śiśupāla there. Śiśupāla too, due to dying at that holy place only, got absorbed into Kṛṣṇa, giving all (desired) objects. Bhīma fashioned a very extensive pool at the place where Śiśupāla was killed, and the (Rājasūya) sacrifice was performed. Bhīma fashioned there a very extensive pool with his mace. It is known as Bhīmakuṇḍa, and has become purifying on the earth. There is no doubt that that fruit which is had by bathing in Yamunā at Indraprastha is had (by bathing) in that pool.

Sūta said:

86-90. That holy place will forgive the faults of a living being who stays there by practices like going round it for a year. The man who goes round it every year, would not be tinged with the evils (committed) at the holy place and sins. He who does not go round (it) does not get sanctification at the holy place. Therefore, those who desire a fruit should go round it. He who reciting Viṣṇu's names goes round it, obtains at every step the fruit of presenting a brown cow. The man who goes round Indraprastha on the fourteenth day of the dark half of Caitra, is blessed, and is freed from all sins.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED TWENTYTHREE

Gem of a Formula

Śaunaka said:

1-2. O glorious Sūta, you are blessed that you make us, plunged very much in the ocean of the mundane existence, drink a large quantity of nectar. O good one, tell us, desiring to cross the worldly existence, the gem of a formula, pure due to devotion, of which the mobile and the immobile are full.

Sūta said:

3-4. O Śaunaka, listen. I shall tell you the very wonderful gem of a formula, which the noble Vasiṣṭha spoke to Dilīpa. Once Dilīpa having saluted Vasiṣṭha, the best brāhmaṇa, his preceptor, asked him as you did (now).

Dilīpa said:

5-9. O revered one, you have particularly told me all the practices, so also practices with those of castes and the stages of life and the daily and occasional obligatory rites. O best sage, I have also heard the kingly duties, sacrifices, gifts (to be made) at holy places and vows etc., which give inexhaustible pleasures in heaven. Now I desire to hear about the ancient path leading to salvation. Tell me about it along which I can luckily go. What is the best of all sacred formulas, the only medicine for all the diseases in the worldly existence? What is the best formula giving salvation to all human beings? Tell all that truthfully and for the love and regard (that you have) for me.

Vasiṣṭha said:

10-11. O king, you desiring the good of all the world, have asked well. I shall, in private, tell you a great secret, emancipating (you) from the worldly existence. Formerly all holy sages intent on (performing) sacrifices and (giving) gifts, asked Nārada, Brahmā's son, the best sage:

The great sages said:

12. O revered one, by what formula shall we go to the

highest position? O glorious one, tell that to us. Please favour us.

Nārada said:

13. Formerly all meditating saints—Sanaka and others—asked in private Brahmā about the path to salvation, very difficult to be obtained.

Brahmā said:

14-20a. O meditating saints, listen to this wonderful secret. All gods and sages having penance as their wealth do not know it. The immutable god Nārāyaṇa told it to me at the beginning of the creation. He, along with the great goddess was worshipped by me. Then the immutable Nārāyaṇa was pleased with me. He gave me the status of the creator and all the literature having its origin in the Veda, so also illuminating formulas, pervasive and non-pervasive. Then I spoke to the god, the ancient Puruṣottama (i.e. Viṣṇu): "O revered one, by what formula (can) men cross the mundane existence? Tell me about it truly for the good of all people. Which of all formulas, is the one without (i.e. not requiring) initiatory rite, which gives men the highest place (even) by being uttered once (only)?"

The lord said:

20b-27. O glorious one, you, desiring the good of all the people, have asked well. Therefore, I shall tell you the secret by means of which men would reach me. Of all the formulas the gem of a formula is auspicious. It gives the highest position even when it is remembered just once. The two gems of (i.e. in) the formula (are: Lakṣmī, Nārāyaṇa). *Nyāsa* (assignment?), *Prayati* (purification?) and *Śaraṇāgati* (approaching for shelter?) are necessary. The formula 'Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa' gives all fruits. Understand in succession the names of the gem of a formula(?). Merely by its utterance I am always pleased. A man born in a (noble) family, an ascetic, one who has mastered the Vedas and Vedāṅgas, one who is given to (performing) sacrifices and (giving) gifts, one resorting to all holy places, so also one who has taken a vow, one who speaks the truth, or even an ascetic having knowledge—is not entitled to the formula. He should carefully avoid it.

Brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, women, and others—all are entitled to it if they are my devotees.

28-33. The excellent formula should be given to those who do not seek the shelter of any other (deity than Viṣṇu), who do not serve any other (deity than Viṣṇu), who do not (try to) reach any other (deity than Viṣṇu). Even if recited once it gives a quick fruit to the afflicted. It keeps away another (i.e. re-)birth even of haughty beings. (If) an afflicted person, or an inquisitive person, or one longing for wealth, or a wise person or a king seeks my shelter (but) once, he would obtain all his desired objects. It should not be told to him who is not initiated, to him who is not a devotee, to a proud person, to an atheist, to a greedy person, to one who is averse to (i.e. who has no) faith. It should not be told to him who has no desire to listen (to it); to him who does not abide by Śiva, to him who is free from lust, anger, hypocrisy, greed, so also to him who resorts to me with steady devotion, this excellent gem of a formula should be duly told.

34-37. (The devotee should observe) rules with regard to place and time, (should have) exact determination of foes and friends, (should know) the nyāsa,[1] mudrā[2] etc., along with the initiatory rite; he should have his body marked with (the impression of) my disc, so also do my worship, should dedicate his actions to me, should seek my shelter only. With great confidence in me he should assign all fruits to me. He should not possess anything. He should avoid talking to non-devotees of Viṣṇu or saluting them. He should also avoid saluting or worshipping other deities than (me).

38-44. Rules like this are declared for him who submits himself (to me). To a man endowed with such qualities, the excellent gem of a formula should be told. I, Nārāyaṇa, ancient Viṣṇu, am its seer; so also I, the ocean of affection, am its deity, along with Lakṣmī. I, Nārāyaṇa, the lord of the entire world, the glorious one, of a good character, fortunate, omniscient, omnipotent, with my desires always fulfilled, omnipresent, having every-

1. Nyāsa: Assignment of the various parts of the body to different deities which is usually accompanied by prayer and corresponding gesticulations.

2. Mudrā: Certain positions of the fingers practised in devotion or religious worship.

one as my relative, ocean of the nectar of pity am with Lakṣmī said to be its deity. Its metre is said to be the goddess Gāyatrī, having twentyfive syllables. He should twice assign seven, six, three, five, two or six limbs(?) He should meditate upon me, along with Lakṣmī not separated from me, of the form of the universe, having in my hands a disc, a conch, a mace, and a lotus, and of a divine form. He, being restrainted and pure, should worship me along with Lakṣmī seated on my left lap, with this gem of a formula, and with sandal, flowers and offerings. O lord of the beings, even if I am worshipped once I am pleased.

Brahmā said:

45-48. O lord, you have properly told this excellent secret, so also the power of the gem of a formula, which gives every success to men. You are the father of all the worlds, so also their mother and preceptor. You are the master, friend, brother, recourse, refuge and friend. O lord of gods, I am your servant, disciple and friend. Therefore, O you ocean of pity, you told this excellent (formula) to me. Now with the desire for the good of all people, tell fully accurately the initiation of this gem of a formula for its proper practice.

The lord said:

49-54. O child, listen, I shall tell you the great rite of the initiation of this gem of a formula. To secure my resort, a man should first resort to a preceptor. The preceptor (should be) endowed with (the knowledge of) the Veda, (should be) Viṣṇu's devotee, free from jealousy, (should) know the formula, (should be) devoted to the formula, (should) always resort to the formula and (be) pure. He should belong to a good school; he should be proficient in the science of Brahman. He should not follow any other (deity than me); should not have any other aim (than me). He should be a brāhmaṇa, free from anger, attachment, and greed. He should teach good behaviour, should long for salvation, and should know the highest soul. A preceptor, a friendly one, having these qualities, who would teach (good) practices is called a preceptor. He who depends upon his preceptor when taught good behaviour, is steady in (obeying the preceptor's) order, is said to be a disciple by the good.

55-64. A preceptor should teach the excellent gem of a formula to a disciple having these characteristics, and endowed with all virtues. On a Dvādaśī day, or when the Sun is in the Śravaṇa constellation or on some day holy to Viṣṇu, a good preceptor should initiate the pleased (disciple). He should get fashioned the Sudarśana disc or the Pāñcajanya conch out of gold, silver, copper or bell-metal. Having bathed it with pure pañcāmṛta,[1] he should worship it before me. He should duly worship it with sandal and flowers, with (the utterance of) the formula. There he should establish fire in accordance with statements from his own Gṛhya (sūtras). The preceptor, the best brāhmaṇa, should offer ghee (into the fire) to the accompaniment of the formula. He should make oblations one thousand and eight times, or one hundred and eight times with the repetition of this gem of a formula or other auspicious formulas sacred to Viṣṇu. With (the recitation of) the hymns like the Puruṣasūkta he should offer ghee and milk into fire. The best brāhmaṇa should drop the disc and the conch into that fire. The preceptor, to the accompaniment (of the formula) of six letters should offer ghee into the fire twenty times. The preceptor, taking a heated disc, should make a mark (with it) and with the conch, to the accompaniment of the formula, on the left and the right arms. Having finished the remaining rite, he should again perform the worship. Then having brought a pitcher full of pure water, having consecrated it with (that) formula only, he should sprinkle (the water) on his head.

65-67. The preceptor should teach the formula to the disciple who has put on a white garment, has sipped water, is polite, has put on the sectarian mark. He should explain the meaning of the formula, and especially its operation. The disciple who has received the formula, should honour the preceptor with ornaments etc. O best god, he who, in this manner, learns the formula from a preceptor, Viṣṇu's devotee, goes to (the place) of Viṣṇu, not otherwise.

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1. Pañcāmṛta: The collection of five sweet things used in worshipping deities. They are: milk, sugar, ghee, curd and honey.

Nārada said:

68-70. The father, Viṣṇu, having thus spoken to the Creator, marked him with his own disc, and he himself gave (i.e. taught) him the formula. O best sages, the god, that lord Brahmā, my father, the lord of all worlds, duly gave (i.e. taught) the formula to me also. Therefore, O best sages, O brāhmaṇas, you too, putting on (the mark) of the Sudarśana (disc), seek the shelter of Viṣṇu's couple of feet.

Vasiṣṭha said:

71-80. All the sages, thus addressed by Nārada, the divine sage, and entitled to the two (feet of Viṣṇu) went to the highest position of Viṣṇu. Therefore, O royal sage, you too desire absorption into Viṣṇu after putting on (the mark of) Sudarśana according to the proper rule of initiation. Seek the shelter of the two feet of Viṣṇu alone. Brahmā, the lord of all the people and the three worlds, himself told me and Nārada also this excellent formula. Nārada taught the formula, exclusive devotion (to) and seeking refuge (of Viṣṇu) to the great sages like Śaunaka living in Naimiṣāraṇya. O king, the great sages, deities, siddhas, sādhyas and demons do not know this most secret formula. I too gave to Parāśara, Śakti's son, this formula. O king, I shall tell you also this great secret—the couple of Lakṣmī and Viṣṇu, exclusive devotion (to) and seeking the refuge (of the two). There is no greater formula than the couple. I tell you the truth. In the worlds there is no practice superior to this. Formerly Brahmā told the truth, repeatedly (told) the truth that there is no other god than Viṣṇu who gives salvation to men. Service to him alone would be salvation, which would cut off (the fruits of) all acts.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED TWENTYFOUR

Bearing the Marks of a Disc etc. Essential for a Brāhmaṇa

Dilīpa said:

1-3. O revered one, tell me all about (it) full of the nectar of devotion to Viṣṇu. Listening to (the account of) devotion to Viṣṇu, that brings happiness, I am not at all satisfied. O best sage, except the ocean of the nectar of devotion to Viṣṇu, what else is the refuge in the fearful forest of the mundane existence to men who are always tormented by the fires with huge flames in the form of the three torments? O great sage, tell (me) in detail the varieties of devotion to the highest soul that are constantly practised by the sages.

Vasiṣṭha said:

4-5. O lord of kings, you ask well about the means of emancipation of men from theworldly existence, viz. devotion to Viṣṇu, the highest lord, which always brings happiness. Formerly goddess Pārvatī asked the same great question to Śiva, worshipped by the world, on the peak of Kailāsa.

Pārvatī said:

6-10. O god of gods, Mahādeva, O killer of Tripura, O lord of gods, tell me about devotion to Viṣṇu, which gives salvation to all human beings. So also the different deities that are worshipped, the hymns, and the various ways of the worship, and the nature of that Viṣṇu, and his qualities like splendour, the nature of his heaven, reaching which (a devotee) does not return (to his world), and due to which the lord Viṣṇu brings about creation, maintenance and destruction. That is the great abode of Viṣṇu reaching which (men) do not return (to this world). With this or that act or means, sinful men, with their minds addicted to objects of senses, reach the highest place. Due to your love for me tell all that to me in detail.

Vasiṣṭha said:

11. Mahādeva, the killer of Tripura, thus asked by the great goddess, saluted Viṣṇu, and with great affection said (to her):

Rudra said:

12-17. Well, O great goddess, O you desiring the good of all people, you ask me well (to tell you) the excellent greatness of (Viṣṇu) the lord of Śrī. O Pārvatī, you are blessed; you have earned religious merit; you are Viṣṇu's devotee. O good one, I am always pleased with your (good) character, beauty and virtues. I shall, O Girijā, tell you about the best devotion (to Viṣṇu), the manner of (reciting) his hymns, and about his form. Viṣṇu, the ancient Vāsudeva is the truth. He is the highest soul, the highest Brahman, the highest light, and greater than the great. He is Acyuta, Puruṣa, Kṛṣṇa, the eternal one, the benevolent lord, the eternal and omnipresent one, the stable one, Rudra, the witness of everything, and the lord of created beings. He is the sacrifice, the lord of sacrifice, and actually the lord of the Veda. He is Hiraṇyagarbha, the sun, the lord creating and sustaining the worlds.

18-28. He is to be described by the letter *A*, is the lord, and the lord of Śrī, the Earth and Nīlā. He is the lord of immortality, and of that which grows with food. He has a thousand heads; he is the soul of all; he has a thousand eyes and a thousand feet. Having touched the earth on all sides, he has stood above it by ten fingers. He is Ananta, the lord of Lakṣmī, Ramā; he possesses qualities and is without them, and is great. He is the lord of all worlds, he has splendour, is omniscient, and is unlimited. O Pārvatī, I shall tell you as I can, the greatness of that Vāsudeva, the chief in the worlds, and the lord of the worlds. With Brahmā and the deities it is impossible for me to describe it, the meaning of all Upaniṣads determined in the Vedānta. I shall also tell you the kinds of his worship. Listen, I shall tell them separately. The marking with Viṣṇu's conch and disc is said to be the first (worship) of Viṣṇu. (Other varieties are:) putting on rectangular marks, accepting hymns of (i.e. holy to) him, worshipping (him), muttering, meditating (on him), recollecting his names; so also narration (of), listening to his (accounts), saluting (him), serving his feet; so also taking the water (flowing) from his feet, and taking food after offering it to him. (So also) serving those who belong to him, faith in the vow of Dvādaśī, planting the Tulasī (plant). (Thus) the devotion to Viṣṇu, the holder of the Śārṅga bow and the god of gods is said to be of

sixteen kinds for freedom from the bondage of the mundane existence. Viṣṇu is always venerable to all gods, so also to me, and especially to brāhmaṇas. Therefore, a brāhmaṇa should everyday duly worship Viṣṇu.

29-37. Having marks of his signs he doubtlessly reaches the feet (or the position) of the lord of Lakṣmī. A brāhmaṇa should have the marks of a conch and a disc at the roots of his arms, (and) for removing all sins the marks should be made after these are heated in fire. Having duly put on the mark of a disc or a conch and a disc or of the five weapons (of Viṣṇu), he should begin his religious duties. Having worn the mark of the disc heated in fire at the roots of his arms, he avoids the fearful city of Yama, and goes to the highest position of Viṣṇu. All that worship, hymns, muttering (of hymns) of him who worships Viṣṇu without (having on his body) the mark of a disc perishes. The brāhmaṇa who having marked (his body) at the roots of arms with a disc heated in fire, (then) mutters the hymn, would obtain salvation. The best brāhmaṇa having put on the mark of Sudarśana disc heated in fire and having duly made offerings should appoint (a brāhmaṇa) for the rites. All the śrāddha (offered) by him who feeds (a brāhmaṇa) without the mark of Viṣṇu on his body, becomes fruitless, and his dead ancestors leave disappointed. One should honour at a śrāddha a brāhmaṇa having (on his body) the mark of Viṣṇu's disc, and should carefully avoid one without the mark of Viṣṇu's disc (on his body). One should present a cow, land, gold to him having a mark of the disc (of Viṣṇu on his body).

38-46. Whatever is given to (a brāhmaṇa) not having the mark of a disc (on his body) is given to a demon. Those who have marks made with a disc heated in fire at the roots of their arms, get freed from all sins, and go to the highest position of Viṣṇu. To him whose body is marked with a disc heated in fire, all holy places and sacrifices have come. There is no doubt about it. A brāhmaṇa, not having (the mark of) the disc (made) duly, would be unrefined. Nothing would come to him even if he performs a thousand sacrifices. A brāhmaṇa, having knowledge not easily obtained, but not (having the mark of) the disc made duly, is condemned among all people, and would fall from the status of a brāhmaṇa. As Viṣṇu, holding the conch and disc is worshipped

by the souls (i.e. men), similarly a brāhmaṇa, having (on his body) the marks of the disc etc. deserves to be honoured by all. A brāhmaṇa, even though he knows all the Vedas, or is proficient in all holy texts, would fall without having (i.e. if he does not have) (the mark of) the disc duly made (on his body); if he is without the mark or the marks of a conch or a disc, he should be put on a donkey and be driven out of the city. Vāsudeva Janārdana is untouched by the primordial matter (Prakṛti). O goddess, a brāhmaṇa having the mark of Viṣṇu's disc is just like that. Therefore, a man should have, at the roots of his arms, the (marks of) heated disc and conch of Viṣṇu, which burn the stream of sins (produced) due to the contact of matter.

47-50. He should have, at the roots of his arms, the marks made with heated disc and conch. Women and śūdras should always have those made with scented sandal (-paste). At the root of the arm of a brāhmaṇa the mark of the disc should be made with a heated (sign). Marks with heated (signs) must be duly made (on the body) of a brāhmaṇa. For the success in (rites prescribed by) the holy and the Smṛti texts, so also for being entitled to worshipping Viṣṇu, (the mark of) the disc should be duly had. For accomplishing the status of Viṣṇu, and for getting knowledge, a man should burn his body with (i.e. have marks of) heated conch and disc, after duly having offered oblations into fire.

51-53. A brāhmaṇa should not mark his body with any other symbol than that of Viṣṇu—with other symbols than the conch, disc, mace, sword and the Śārṅga (bow) of Viṣṇu. He should burn his body with marks (made with Viṣṇu's symbols). He, whose body is burnt with (i.e. has) other marks, is not entitled to (performing) rites. One should avoid a brāhmaṇa not having the disc (-mark) from a distance. In the world one should not look at a brāhmaṇa who is not a devotee of Viṣṇu as (one does not look at) a cāṇḍāla. Viṣṇu's devotee, even if he is outside the castes, purifies the three worlds.

54-59. Therefore, O you of a charming face, brāhmaṇas should duly have marks (on their bodies). Brāhmaṇas (with their bodies marked) with Viṣṇu's disc are refined and noble for acquiring mastery of hymns, knowledge and for salvation. Brāhmaṇas without (marks of) Viṣṇu's disc are not refined. As

it is urged by the holy texts, especially brāhmaṇas, living in all stages of life, should duly have (the mark of) Viṣṇu's disc. Those who know the Vedas consider that a brāhmaṇa should have (the mark of) Sudarśana on his right arm, and (that of) the conch on the left. The wearing of (the mark of) the disc etc. is told in the Mahopaniṣad (the great Upaniṣad texts); so also in the Sāman (Veda), Yajur (Veda) and the Ṛg (Veda), O you of a beautiful face. O Viṣṇu, the other ancients have the marks of your pure lotus, disc for crossing the ocean of existence, at the roots of their arms. Others have other marks of you.

60-64. The extensive disc is known as Caraṇa. Pavitra is an old and auspicious word. Burnt by the disc they would cross the ocean of sins. Viṣṇu's disc is the lord of the hymns (brāhmaṇaspatyam?) and has always pervaded the world. Those whose bodies are not burnt (with it) do not go to the highest position. Those whose bodies are burnt with (it) go to the highest position. Know from me the names of Viṣṇu's disc in succession: Pavitra, Caraṇa, Nemi, Sudarśana, Haricakra, Sahasrāra (having a thousand spokes), Prākṛtaghna (killer of the mean), Lokadvāra (a gate to the good world), Mahaujasa (very bright). Purify us with the Brahmanhood, pure and burnt in fire. Purify us with that Pavitra, having flames of you, O Agni.

65-69. May the Pāvamānya (hymns) purify me with the thousand-edged disc with which they always protect themselves. The disc of the Creator is bright with metal plates and golden. We knowing the hymn purify it (already) purified by it. The unaging disc with the felly is the eye of the noble one. Having put it on gods reached a high position. Therefore, (the marks of) the weapons should be duly put on particularly by brāhmaṇas, especially by Viṣṇu's devotees. The noble one of a pure heart, who having the Ūrdhvapuṇḍra (perpendicular marks of sandal on the forehead) and the mark of the disc, meditates on Viṣṇu's position, by means of singing the hymn always reaches (god Viṣṇu) higher than the highest always remaining in his heart.

70-74. Those devotees of Viṣṇu, having stuck to (i.e. round) their necks the garland of Tulasī or lotuses or a rosary, having the marks of conch or disc at the roots of their arms, or those having the Ūrdhvapuṇḍra (the vertical lines) on their foreheads, quickly purify the world. Beings are not sorry for those who pre-

serve (but) do not properly carry (the mark of) the extensive disc of the lord of heaven. Those who carry the disc very firm(-ly marked) with (the proper) rite on their arm(s), quickly occupy, by means of their lustre, a high place in the sky. He who has at the root(s) of his arms the disc mark of Viṣṇu, the highest soul (made) by heating (the disc) in the sacrificial fire, crosses the great ocean of the mundane existence, and goes to the pure world of the highest lord. A man should make at the roots of his arms the marks with the heated discs etc. He should also get such marks put on (the bodies of) his wife, children, servants and beasts etc.

75-80. O you of an excellent face, all holy texts tell this. In the history (books) and the Purāṇas the same thing is told. The mark of devotion to Viṣṇu is said to be of two kinds: external and internal. The external (mark) is (produced) by means of a conch, a disc etc. The internal (one) is freedom from attachment. One having similarity between the external and the internal is said to belong to Viṣṇu. Therefore, the disc etc. are said to be the first (external) mark pertaining to Viṣṇu. The internal (mark) is realising the soul after being free from the faults due to Cupid (i.e. passion of love). So also showing compassion to all beings, tranquility and absence of greed for the objects of senses. So also having no attachment for sons, wife etc.; and delight in the study of Yoga; serving the highest lord by means of undistracted application to devotion. Therefore, marking with (Viṣṇu's) weapons like the disc is said to pertain to Viṣṇu. Vaiṣṇavatva (the status of belonging to Viṣṇu) cannot be had without the marks of the disc etc.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED TWENTYFIVE

The Efficacy of Ūrdhvapuṇḍra

Śaṅkara said:

1-4. O you of an auspicious appearance, I shall tell you the greatness of the Ūrdhvapuṇḍra (vertical Vaiṣṇava mark on the

forehead). The best brāhmaṇa would be free from the bond of the worldly existence just on having it. Within the large and very charming space in the Ūrdhvapuṇḍra, Viṣṇu, god of gods, is seated with Lakṣmī. Therefore, the body of him, on which there would be the mark, is the clean, auspicious temple of the lord. That devotee of Viṣṇu, who has the mark made with white clay, has bathed at all holy places, is prepared for all sacrifices.

5-8. The brāhmaṇa having the mark is honoured among all people, (and) getting into an excellent aeroplane, goes to the highest place of Viṣṇu. The best brāhmaṇa should put on the mark thrice (a day), for purification of all sins, and for obtaining the fruit of performing sacrifices and digging wells and doing other acts of charity. (A man) seeing one having the mark, is freed from all sins. By saluting him devoutly he would obtain the fruit of all (kinds of) charity. The dead ancestors of him who will feed a brāhmaṇa having the mark are undoubtedly pleased for crores of kalpas.

9-14. O you of an auspicious face, he who, having the mark, performs a śrāddha, would obtain, for crores of kalpas, the fruit of the śrāddha (performed) at Gayā. The religious merit of the sacrifices, gifts, penance, muttering (of hymns), sacrificial rites etc. of one having the mark is endless. All the sacrifices performed, wells dug, and other charitable acts done by him who does any act without having the mark, are useless. That human body which is without the mark should not be seen at all. It would be like a cremation ground. All the rites etc. which a man without the mark would do, are taken (away) by demons; and he goes down to hell. A brāhmaṇa well-versed in the Vedas, should have the mark with white clay. The wise one should never have it in an oblique manner even in a misery.

15-18. Brāhmaṇas should have the mark. The mark of kṣatriyas should be round; that of vaiśyas should be strip-like; that of śūdras should have three lines. The mark should be made with clay; the round one with musk; the strip-like one with sandal; and the three-lined one with sacred ash. The vertical mark is recommended for all. It is not prohibited. A kṣatriya etc. also, if he is Viṣṇu's devotee should have it. Brāhmaṇas are not to have the oblique or the strip-like mark. And they are not to worship any other (deity) than Viṣṇu, the highest lord.

19-23. O goddess, if a brāhmaṇa, learned and born in a noble family has put on (the mark of) sacred ash, one should avoid such a brāhmaṇa, as a pot in which liquor is left as the remnant. The mark of three lines is the practice for those who are śūdras and like śūdras. There is no doubt that a brāhmaṇa having the mark of three lines, falls. The very noble ones, interested in the good of all living beings, should have a puṇḍra with a gap like the shape of Viṣṇu's foot. A man should have the mark in accordance with the precept, resembling the foot of Viṣṇu and having a gap in its centre; for that is Viṣṇu's temple. He should have the mark which is good, pleasing, has the shape of a staff, good sides, which is very charming, very beautiful, and which has a gap at the centre.

24-27. Therefore, O you of an auspicious appearance, brāhmaṇas and women should always have the mark which has a gap, has the shape of a staff, and is very beautiful. In the large and very beautiful gap at the centre of the vertical mark, Viṣṇu is seated with Lakṣmī. That mean brāhmaṇa who would have a gapless vertical mark, expels Viṣṇu along with Lakṣmī seated there. There is no doubt that there always is a dog's foot on the foreheads of those mean brāhmaṇas who have a gapless vertical mark.

28-40. Therefore, in order to attain the same world as of Viṣṇu, a brāhmaṇa should always have a mark with a gap, with turmeric, and having auspiciousness. For securing absorption into Viṣṇu one should, with great devotion, bring the clay from the pool on the Veṅkaṭa mountain, and make the vertical mark (with it). A devoted person should bring the clay from the root of Tulasī of (i.e. dear to) Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and should make the vertical mark (with it). Viṣṇu is pleased with him. Or the best brāhmaṇa, having brought the pleasing clay from the auspicious, charming pool (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu at Dvārāvatī, should make the mark (with it) in order to secure all desired objects. He who, having brought with great devotion, clay from the banks of Gaṅgā, makes the mark with it, would obtain the fruit of all sacrifices. Due to having the mark (with) sandal, turmeric, so also (with) ash from the sacred fire one is said to control everything. He should bring the clay from that place which is sacred to Viṣṇu. One should get the clay from the top of a mountain, the bank of a river, the root of a bilva (tree), a reservoir of water, the coast of a sea, an anthill,

especially from a place sacred to Viṣṇu, and from the place where the water used for Viṣṇu's bath always flows, for having the mark. A man, taking clay with water flowing from Viṣṇu's feet, and having puṇḍra marks on the limbs of his body at Śrīraṅga, Veṅkaṭagiri, Śrīkūrma, the auspicious Dvārakā, Prayāga, Narasiṁha mountain, Varāha, a Tulasī-grove would get absorption into Viṣṇu. For having the mark clay should be taken from that place wherefrom the noble devotees of Viṣṇu take it. A dark mark is said to cause peace. So also a red one is said to bring about control. They say that a yellow one leads to riches. The white one leads to salvation and is auspicious.

41-50. They say that a round, oblique, gapless, short, long, protracted, thin, crooked, ugly mark, one with its top closed or with its root cut off, with a line missing, inauspicious, rough, fixed, one that is not drawn with the finger, not having fragrance, or inadequate is unfortunate. One should draw it with clay beginning with the root of the nose. Starting it from the middle of the eye-brows, he should have a gap in it. The gap should be of the measure of two fingers, and the sides of the size of a finger. With white clay he should draw a better and auspicious mark. He should meditate upon Keśava (as staying) on his forehead. (He should meditate) upon Nārāyaṇa (as staying) in his belly, Mādhava (as staying) in his chest, and Govinda (as staying) in his throat. (He should meditate) upon Viṣṇu (as staying) in the right side of his belly and Madhusūdana (as staying) in his right arm. (He should meditate) upon Trivikrama (as staying) in (the right side of) his neck, and Vāmana (as staying) in his left side. (He should meditate) upon Śrīdhara (as staying) in his left arm, and Hṛṣīkeśa in (the left side of) his neck. (He should meditate) upon Padmanābha (as staying) in his back, and place Dāmodara in the lower part of his spine. And with the water for washing it (he should meditate) upon Vāsudeva (as present) in his head. He should draw the mark of the measure of four fingers on his forehead, both the arms, on both (the sides) of the back, and on the neck. On the belly and near its sides a long one of the measure of ten fingers is recommended. On the arms and chest a mark of the measure of eight fingers is recommended. Thus a brāhmaṇa should always have twelve marks.

51-59. He should, after meditating upon those images with

their respective hymns, have the marks (on those respective limbs of his body). In the gap he should have (i.e. put) auspicious turmeric. They say, kṣatriyas should have four marks and vaiśyas should have two. One mark is laid down for women and śūdras. He should have four marks on the forehead, on his chest, and on the arms. Two are laid down for the forehead and the chest and one for the place where the hair is separated. Of all the marks, the vertical one is said to be the first (that should be put) on the forehead. As laid down, it should be had in the order of the forehead first. One should have the images of Vāsudeva etc. in the four vertical marks. In two he should have the two (images of) Govinda and Kṛṣṇa and one of Nārāyaṇa. O Girijā, I have thus told (you) the manner in which the puṇḍra is had. The triad of one resembling the aśvattha-leaf, the reed-leaf, or the lotus-leaf, is said to be 'Mohana'. A pure, great devotee of Viṣṇu, should, in case of a controversy, have a vertical mark of the shape of a staff. Those, the roots of whose arms are marked with Sudarśana, so also all of whose limbs are marked with the vertical puṇḍra, who have lotus garlands and rosaries, protect the people from contact with heaps of sins.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED TWENTYSIX

The Meaning of the Mantra (Formula)

Śaṅkara said:

1-5. At (the time of) a nyāsa or worship, one should resort to Viṣṇu's formula (mantra). The highest position is not had by means of a formula not sacred to Viṣṇu. If the former couple of sacred names (i.e. the one mentioned above) is imparted by one who is a non-Vaiṣṇava, then one should again receive it from a follower of Viṣṇu. Even if a man has studied a thousand branches (of the holy texts), even if he was initiated into all (kinds of) sacrifices, even if he is born in a good family, he should not be a preceptor if he is not a follower of Viṣṇu. That follower of Viṣṇu who properly imparts the two sacred names, should be

known as the preceptor, tearing off the bond of the mundane existence. A brāhmaṇa should, after resorting to a preceptor, live (with him) for a year. The preceptor, knowing his behaviour, should impart him the formula.

6-9. Having first done the sacraments as burning his body (i.e. putting sectarian marks on it), he should then utter the formula, after burning, putting the sectarian mark and giving a name (to him). Then he should teach his disciple of a pure heart. The rite of burning with (i.e. putting marks like) the (heated) disc (etc.) is called tāpa (or burning). The sectarian mark is said to be vertical and the name (accepted by) the Vaiṣṇava sect is pronounced. Then in accordance with the rule (about the mantra) the teacher should teach the formula to the disciple. (He should teach him) nyāsa, the eight-syllabled or any other formula sacred to Viṣṇu. O you of an auspicious face, here nyāsa is of a high value to the followers of Viṣṇu.

10-12. Therefore, for them nyāsa is said to be superior. A brāhmaṇa highly devoted to nyāsa is said to be the best. There is no greater mantra than a nyāsa. I am telling you the truth. Nyāsa and the couple of mantras are synonyms for devotion. Learn it from me. After having instruction in the two, he should practise all rites. He who is not entitled to both does not deserve to perform all rites.

13-16. Therefore, the best brāhmaṇa, having studied the two, should study the eight-syllabled formula properly. The formula is said to be eight-syllabled due to the inclusion of (the syllable) Om. The wise say that that is a sacred formula which naturally has Om at its beginning. Except at the beginning of all formulas Om is not naturally there. One should use it before (i.e. at the beginning of) all formulas. O you of an auspicious face, the sacred syllable Om is Brahman. It is the chief of all formulas. One should use it at the commencement of all formulas.

17-21. At the root-formula Om is naturally settled. The first (syllable) is *Om*, having one letter. Then is (the word) *namaḥ* having two letters. Then in proper order are the five letters *Nārāyaṇāya*. Thus the formula, accomplishing all objects, should be known to be eight-syllabled. It removes all sorrows; it is glorious; it contains all formulas; it is auspicious. Its seer is Nārāyaṇa, and (he) himself, the lord of Śrī, is its deity. Its metre

is the divine Gāyatrī and origin is Om. The power of the formula is goddess Śrī who is never-failing. The first foot is said to be the letter *Om*; the second to be *Namaḥ*, and the third to be *Nārāyaṇāya*. Thus the three feet are told.

22-26. The letters *a*, *u*, and *m* form the syllable *Om*, which is Brahman's word, and is of the nature of the three Vedas. Viṣṇu is expressed by the letter *a*, Śrī by the letter *u*; the letter *m* is the servant of these two, and is said to be the twentyfifth (letter). It is said by the wise that *a* expresses Viṣṇu's form. The sages say that *u* expresses the form of the goddess Śrī. The letter *m* expresses the soul, the puruṣa, the twentyfifth (principle of the Sāṁkhyas). The elements are expressed by the class of letters beginning with *ka*; and the senses are denoted by the class of letters beginning with *ca*. The class of letters beginning with *ṭa* and that beginning with *ta* denote knowledge, so also the letters like *dha* (indicate the same). The mind is expressed by the letter *pa* only; and ego by the letter *pha*.

27-30. Mahat (i.e. Intellect) and Prakṛti (Primordial Matter) (the principles enunciated in the Sāṁkhya System) are (respectively) expressed by the letters *ba* and *bha*. The soul is said to be the letter *ma* and is said to be the twentyfifth (principle). It is different from the body, the senses, the mind, the vital breath; and has no other means. He is the remnant of the lord, is denoted by *ma* and is sentient. Some say that *ma* indicates just the emphasis. According to them the principle of Śrī is expressed by the letter *va* (*ma*?) only. As the sun's lustre does not go away from him, so Lakṣmī does not go away from him. Viṣṇu, the ocean of auspicious qualities, is expressed by the letter *ā*.

31-36. The lord of Śrī is the remnant of all souls, is the seed (i.e. source) of the world, and the highest person. He is the author and the sustainer of the world, the lord, and people's kin. (Lakṣmī) always controls the worlds, does not go away from Viṣṇu. She is mother of the entire world and Viṣṇu's charming wife. Here (i.e. in the mantra) the letter *u* expresses Śrī, who is the support of the world. The wise say that the letter *ma* expresses the soul, the servant of the two (i.e. Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī). He is the support of knowledge, has knowledge as his quality, is sentient, and is beyond Prakṛti. He is not insentient; he is without any modification; is uniform in nature and has (no other form than)

his own form. He is subtle, eternal, pervading, of the nature of intellect and joy, is of the nature of ego, immutable, the soul, of different forms, and eternal. He cannot be burnt, cannot be cut off, cannot be made wet, cannot be dried, and is indestructible; he is (thus) endowed with such qualities and is an effect of the highest (soul).

37-42. The letter *ma* expresses the individual soul, always dependent. He is the servant of Viṣṇu only and of none else. Thus is determined his servitude to be mediocre. O sinless one, the meaning of *Om* should be known like this. I have explained it (to you). O auspicious one, the exposition of *Om* (is done) by means of the remnant of the meaning, the formula(?). In this world, he who is the servant of another, does not get freedom. Therefore, with (the help of) the mind one should turn away Mahat and Ahaṁkāra (i.e. Intellect and Ego). That act which is done by the knowledge of one's means, is also prohibited. The letter *ma* is (i.e. stands for) ego, and the letter *na* prohibits it. Therefore, with his mind only he gets freedom from the ego. Every accomplishment is due to the mind. Otherwise he would perish. Whatever is with the mind is said to be the ego.

43-46. One having egotism has absolutely no happiness. He whose mind is deluded by egotism sinks in the blinding darkness. Therefore, his freedom through mind is not prohibited. He is dependent upon the lord and lives under his influence. Therefore, the sentient is not the author of the means. The mobile and the immobile exist due to the will of the highest lord. Therefore, he would completely give up the application of his own power. Due to the lord's power there is nothing that is not obtained by him.

47-53. Having placed the burden (i.e. the responsibility) on that lord of Lakṣmī, he should do acts of (i.e. sacred to) him only. The highest soul, Viṣṇu, is the master. I always belong to him. His mind should be employed according to the desire of that lord only. Thus it is noble when egotism and sense of mineness are abandoned by the mind. In the mundane existence the sense of mineness is the root of the bondage due to the deeds. Therefore, a wise man should avoid Mahat (Intellect) and Ahaṁkāra (ego) with (the help of) the mind. (Now) O you auspicious Girijā, I shall explain (to you) the word *Nārāyaṇa*. *Nārā* is the assemblage of the souls. This Puruṣa (Nārāyaṇa) is their refuge. And they

are his abode; therefore he is said to be *Nārāyaṇa.* The entire world—the sentient and insentient objects—is heard, is seen. He, who always remains after pervading it, is said to be *Nārāyaṇa.* The groups of all men are said to be *Nārā.* He is their refuge and support. Therefore, he is said to be *Nārāyaṇa.* The wise know the principles produced from *Nara* (i.e. the Supreme Spirit) as *nārā.*

54-59. They alone are his abode. Therefore, he is called *Nārāyaṇa,* by whom the world, after devouring it even at the end of the kalpa, is supported, and by whom it is again created. Therefore he is said to be *Nārāyaṇa.* The entire world consisting of the mobile and the immobile is called *Nāra.* To it he is connected; therefore he is said to be *Nārāyaṇa.* The *Nāra*—the host of men —is his abode or refuge. Therefore, he is always called *Nārāyaṇa* by the sages; from him spring the worlds, as the massive foam in the ocean. Since they again merge into him, therefore, he is said to be *Nārāyaṇa.* He is (residing) at the eternal position, is eternal, and is always free and alone enjoys; he is the lord of the entire world. Therefore, he is called *Nārāyaṇa. Nārāyaṇa* is the highest Brahman. *Nārāyaṇa* is the highest principle.

60-64. *Nārāyaṇa* has remained after pervading whatever is seen or heard within and without this world. Hari, Nārāyaṇa, Acyuta is the Supreme soul with the sins destroyed. He resides within all beings. He is divine, always (all) alone, and is eternal. He is the seer and is what is to be seen. He is the listener and is what is listened to also. He is the one that touches and is also what is touched. He meditates and is what is meditated upon. He is the speaker and what is spoken. He is the knower and what is known. He is the sentient and insentient world. All that is said to be Hari, the lord of Śrī, Nārāyaṇa. He, the Supreme Being, has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet. Having pervaded all the worlds he stands above them by (the measure of) ten fingers.

65-69. All that was and will be is Nārāyaṇa Hari. And he is the lord of immortality and the Virāṭ; the Supreme Being (grows beyond) by the means of food. He alone is the Supreme Being, Viṣṇu, Vāsudeva, Acyuta, Hari, Hiraṇmaya, and the lord; he is immortal, eternal, auspicious (Śiva). He is the master of the entire world, is the lord of all people, and the master. He is Hiraṇyagarbha, the Sun, is Ananta (the endless) and the great

god. The word *Bhagavat*, so also the word *Puruṣa* and the word *Nirupādhi* stand for Vāsudeva, the soul of all. The god, the lord Viṣṇu, the highest soul, the friend of the world, the only ruler of the movable and the immovable is the greatest refuge of the ascetics.

70-73. That one who is naturally merged into the sound uttered at the beginning of the Veda and who is settled in the Vedānta (i.e. the Upaniṣads), who is the greatest, is the great god. That one, viz. Viṣṇu, who is (indicated by) the letter *a*, the one who is Nārāyaṇa Hari, is the eternal Supreme Being, the highest soul, the great lord. Sages use the word *Īśvara* (i.e. the lord) also for him in whom wonderful glory exists. Unconditional lordship exists in Viṣṇu. The ancient words of Veda have described him as the soul, the lord. Therefore, in Vāsudeva the great lordship exists.

74-88. Due to his splendour he is *Tripād* (literally, having three feet). He is the lord of sport. He, the soul of all, has two kinds of grandeurs and glory. He who is the lord of Śrī, Bhū and Nīlā is called the lord. Therefore, mastery over all exists in Vāsudeva. He is the lord of sacrifice, is the sacrifice, the enjoyer of sacrifice, the performer of sacrifice, the lord, the enjoyer of sacrifice, the Puruṣa (i.e. the deity) of sacrifice. He alone is the highest lord. He is the lord of sacrifice. He is the enjoyer of the oblations made to gods and all offerings to the dead ancestors. He is immutable. He, Hari, is the lord here. All goblins and demons go away from his vicinity. He, Viṣṇu, who became Virāṭ and Hari, is himself the highest lord, who pleases the three worlds. With him as the complete oblation gods performed a sacrifice. Those who have a double row of teeth are born from that sacrifice. From that sacrifice with all the oblations sprang *ṛks*, *sāmans*. From it sprang horses, cows, men etc. The entire world consisting of the mobile and the immobile sprang from the body of the Supreme Being consisting of everything. The castes were his face, arms, thighs and feet in due order. From his feet the earth came up and the heaven from his head. From his mind the moon was produced, and the sun from his eye. Fire with a thousand eyes (sprang) from his mouth, and the ever-moving wind from his breath. From his navel came up Brahmā, the sky, the movable and immovable world. Since the entire world came up from the eternal Viṣṇu, therefore, Viṣṇu full of all, is called Nārā-

yaṇa. Hari, having thus created the world again devours it, as a spider does the web produced from its saliva. Since, having curbed Brahmā, Indra, Rudra, Yama and Varuṇa, he subdues them, therefore, he is called Hari. This ancient Supreme Being having put the world in his belly, sleeps in the coating of (his) Māyā, which has become an ocean. (In the beginning) here this Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa, Acyuta was alone.

89-93. Brahmā, Rudra, gods, great sages, this heaven, this earth, the moon, the sun, the stars, the world, the (cosmic) egg covered by Mahat (were) not there. O auspicious one, since the entire world was held by that Hari (in his belly) and was again created at the time of creation, therefore he is said to be Nārāyaṇa. O Pārvatī, service to him is described in the formula by the dative case. This entire world, beginning with Brahmā, is his slave. Knowing the meaning to be like this one should then use the formula. O you of an excellent face, without knowing the meaning of the formula, one would not get success, so also enjoyment, devotion and salvation.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED TWENTYSEVEN

The Description of the Vibhūti of Tripād

Pārvatī said:

1-2. Tell me in detail, the importance of the meaning and the words of the sacred formula, so also the lord's *vibhūti* (divine properties) and his qualities. O lord of all gods, properly tell me all about that highest abode of Viṣṇu, and about the kinds of his *vyūhas* (divine manifestations).

The lord said:

3-7. O goddess, listen. I shall explain to you the nature of the highest soul; so also the *vibhūti* and group of qualities of that Viṣṇu. That great, Supreme Being who is mentioned as Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa, is the lord of the worlds, and the eternal highest soul. The lord has hands and feet on all sides, has eyes on all

sides. Having all worlds and great abodes in it (i.e. his body) he stands above the minds of men. The lord of Lakṣmī, Puruṣottama, has thus a multiple nature. For enjoyment with the goddess he takes up divine and auspicious forms. His is a large body. His form is like that of fire. Viṣṇu took to the form of a youth and a boy. He enjoyed with Lakṣmī, the mother of the worlds, as the Moon with rays (producing) nectar (enjoys with) his moonlight.

8-13. This (lord) of the goddess of the world is a young boy, ever young. Having handsomeness like that of a crore of Cupids he remains at the highest place. For his enjoyment there is the highest sky; for his sport the entire world. The two kinds of Viṣṇu's vibhūti are due to his enjoyment and sport. He always remains enjoying. Sometime he withdraws his sport. Due to his having a (special) power, he has both enjoyment and sport. The pervading with his third step is done in the highest abode. One step of him was here also. His vibhūti with the third step is perpetual, (while) the step (on the earth) is non-perpetual. That eternal auspicious form of the lord has stayed in the highest abode. It is infallible, eternal, divine, and has always resorted to youth. It is always enjoying the goddess Lakṣmī and is surrounded by Lakṣmī and the earth. This Lakṣmī of Viṣṇu, the mother of the world, is eternal and imperishable.

14-21. O you of an auspicious face, as Viṣṇu is omnipresent so is Lakṣmī. This ever auspicious wife of Viṣṇu rules over the world. She has hands and feet on all sides. She has eyes and heads on all sides. This Nārāyaṇī, the mother of the world, is the resort of the entire world. The entire immobile and mobile world has resorted to (i.e. depends upon) her glance. The existence and the dissolution of the world is due to her opening and closing (her) eyes. This great Lakṣmī is the first of all. She has three constituents (viz. sattva, rajas and tamas). She is the greatest goddess. She of a visible and invisible form, remains after having pervaded everything. The great goddess having seen the entire universe void, filled that entire (universe) with her own lustre. That Lakṣmī is the Earth only, well-known as goddess Nīlā. Being the support of the world, she has resorted to the form of the earth. She herself would be of the form of Nīlā due to her liquid form of the nature of water etc. She has obtained

the form of Lakṣmī. She is of the nature of wealth and speech. Thus, she, the goddess of the world, has resorted to Viṣṇu. O you of an auspicious face, all the varieties of knowledge would be (i.e. are) her forms.

22-23. Everything that has a beautiful form is said to be her body only. It remains in women as beauty, good character and behaviour, and good fortune (in the form of having their husbands alive). O Girijā, her beauty is at the head (i.e. top of the beauty) of all women. By means of the glance of her, of a strong vision, Brahmā, Śiva, Indra the lord of heaven, the Moon, the Sun, Kubera, Yama, Agni obtain ample affluence.

24-28. He who, after getting up in the morning would recite these auspicious names of her, viz. Lakṣmī, Śrī, Kamalā, Vidyā, Mātā, Viṣṇupriyā (dear to Viṣṇu), Satī, Padmālayā (having a lotus as her abode), Padmahastā (having a lotus in her hand), Padmākṣī (lotus-eyed), Lokasundarī, Bhutānām Īśvarī (She who controls the beings), Nityā, Sahyā (literally, bearable), Sarvagatā (omnipresent), Śubhā (auspicious), Viṣṇupatnī, Mahādevī, Kṣīrodatanayā (daughter of the Milky Ocean), Ramā, Anantā (endless), Lokamātā (the mother of the world), Bhū, Nīlā, Sarvasukhapradā (giving all pleasures), Rukmiṇī, so also Sītā, Śubhā (auspicious), Sarvavedavatī (possessing all Vedas), Satī, Sarasvatī, Gaurī, Śānti, Svāhā (the oblations offered to gods), Svadhā (the oblations offered to dead ancestors), Rati, Nārāyaṇī, Viṣṇu's eternal beautiful wife never leaving him, obtains wealth and faultless riches and grains.

29-37. I here invoke Śrī who has golden complexion, who is attractive, who has a golden and silver chaplet, who is moon-like, full of gold, Lakṣmī, who does not go away from Viṣṇu, who is perceptible through her fragrance, who is haughty, always nourished, who is the goddess of wealth, who controls all beings. The great goddess thus praised in Ṛgveda gave all the pleasure of affluence to gods like Śiva. This ancient wife of Viṣṇu controls this world. The entire mobile and immobile world resorts to (i.e. depends upon) her glances. He, the indestructible, immutable Supreme Being, on whose chest the goddess like Agni's lustre, rests, is actually the lord of all. He is the affluent Nārāyaṇa, the ocean of the quality of love. He is the lord, is good-tempered, amiable, omniscient and all-powerful.

His desires are always fully gratified; he is a natural friend and companion. He is the ocean of the nectar of compassion. He is the shelter of men. He is the giver of heaven, salvation and happiness to his devotees. He is the mine of pity. I shall fully do service to that Viṣṇu. In all conditions like time and place the form of the lord of Kamalā is well-established. A man would easily obtain service to Viṣṇu.

38-42. Having thus known the meaning of the sacred formula, a man should properly practise devotion to him. All this immobile and mobile world is under his control. Lord Śrīmat Nārāyaṇa is the lord, the master of the worlds. He is the mother, the father, the son, the kinsman, the abode, the refuge and the shelter. The lord of Śrī has auspicious qualities; he gives the fruits of all desires. He is the lord of the world, who is described as qualityless in the holy texts. He is said to be so in the sense that he is devoid of Prakṛti-born qualities associated with what should be abandoned. The falseness of the display of which is (indicated) by passages found in Vedānta, i.e. all that is seen, consists in its being transient. In this case also, the Prakṛti-born form of the (cosmic) egg itself is perishable.

43-48. In the same way the transitoriness of the Prakṛti-born forms is explained. The meaning is: O great goddess, the Prakṛti has come up for the play of Viṣṇu, the god of gods, entitled to sport. This egg (i.e. cosmos) having Prakṛti as its source is charming as it is complete with the four and ten worlds, oceans with islands, four kinds of beings and mountains with very lofty peaks. It is endowed with qualities more than ten; it is covered with seven covers. By means of that time only which moves in the form of (the measures of time like) kalā,[1] kāṣṭhā,[2] the creation, maintenance and destruction of the world would be (i.e. take place). A day of Brahmā is of the duration of four thousand yugas. As many years' (duration) is a night of Brahmā, whose birth is not known. When the end of Brahmā comes, he would be destroying everything.

49-51. The worlds existing in the (cosmic) egg are burnt by the destructive fire at the end of the world. Then all the souls are

1. Kalā: A division of time variously computed as one minute, 48 seconds, or 8 seconds.

2. Kāsṭhā: A measure of time, 1/30 kalā.

put into the Prakṛti (i.e. the personified will) of Viṣṇu. The cover of the egg, the beings, are merged into the primordial matter. That primordial matter is the support of the entire world, and has resorted to Viṣṇu. By means of her the lord always brings about the creation and destruction of the world. The lord has created the illusion in the form of the world for his sport.

52-54. She (called) Avidyā (ignorance), Prakṛti (primordial matter), Māyā (illusion), Guṇatrayamayī (consisting of the three constituents, viz. sattva, rajas and tamas), Sanātanī (the ancient one) is ever the cause of creation, maintenance and destruction. This Yoganidrā (Viṣṇu's sleep at the end of a yuga), the great illusion, the Prakṛti having the three constituents, unmanifest, Pradhāna is the sport of Viṣṇu that does not change. Due to Prakṛti only the creation and destruction of the world would always take place. The place of Prakṛti beyond calculation is imperishable, dense darkness.

55-59. On the boundary on the side above is Virajā; on the lower side the ancient one is limitless. She in her gross and subtle condition has subdued the entire world. Creation and destruction are said to be the two states of expansion and contraction of her. Thus all beings are within Prakṛti. Then all this great world within Prakṛti is void. Thus the excellent form of (his) vibhūti is of the form of Prakṛti. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, listen to the vibhūti of the Tripād (liberally, having three feet or steps). The river Virajā is between Pradhāna and the highest heaven. She, the auspicious one, is caused to flow with the water produced by the sweat of the Vedāṅgas. At the other side of her, in the highest heaven is the ancient vibhūti, viz. Tripād (i.e. Viṣṇu).

60-63. (The nature of the highest place of Viṣṇu is:) immortal, eternal, continual, endless, the highest position, pure, full of sattva (i.e. goodness), divine, immutable and Brahman's place. It is unchanging and has the lustre equal to that of many crores of suns. It is full of the Vedas, is pure, and free from creation and destruction. It is beyond calculation, unaging, continual, free from wakefulness and sleep etc. It is golden; it gives salvation; it gives bliss and happiness. It is without similarity or excess (i.e. nothing is equal or superior to it). It is without a beginning or

an end. It is auspicious. It is wonderful due to lustre; is charming; is always the ocean of joy.

64-67. Viṣṇu's highest place is endowed with these and other qualities. The sun, or the moon, or the fire does not illumine it. That is the highest place of Viṣṇu, after going to which (beings) do not return (to the earth). That is Viṣṇu's highest abode, which is eternal, continual and fixed. Even for hundreds of crores of kalpas Viṣṇu's place cannot be described by me, or by Brahmā, or by hosts of best sages. O dear one, the unfallen lord stays at that place; one may or may not know him. It is immutable; it is a mystery (even) to the Vedas (or it is a secret of the Vedas); in it all gods were seated. There is none who can describe it. What can one do with a ṛc? Those who know it are these, seated here.

68-75. O goddess, the wise ones always see that highest abode of Viṣṇu, which is indestructible, eternal, divine, and is like an expanded eye. It is not impossible for deities like Brahmā, Rudra to enter it. The best meditating sages see it through knowledge, the path of the holy texts. I, Brahmā, gods and great sages do not understand the significance of all the Upaniṣads. On understanding it I shall tell it, O you of a good vow. At that highest place of Viṣṇu, called good and auspicious, cows with many horns and very happy created beings live. They say here is the abode of Viṣṇu, dressed as a cowherd. With the cows and cowherds of pleasant appellations the great abode shines. It has the complexion of the sun. The unfalling lustre, viz. Viṣṇu's place is beyond darkness. It is Brahmā's prop. That is a pure, good ancient world. At this highest position, the eternal place, in which the vulgar do not find a place, the two, young Śrī and the ancient (Viṣṇu), being watchful, stayed.

76-80. Bhū and Nīlā, dear to Viṣṇu, are the two sisters from there. Here the old Sādhyas, and all the ancient gods dwell. Those of an auspicious appearance, and great ones sought out heaven. There the learned watchful brāhmaṇas kindle (the fire). The wise brāhmaṇas, desiring its contact, go to that place. That highest place of Viṣṇu is called Mokṣa (liberation). Those free from bondage obtain (i.e. reach) that happy place. Reaching it they do not come back (i.e. are not reborn). Therefore, it is called

Mokṣa (liberation). Mokṣa is the highest place (state); it is divine, immortal, the abode of Viṣṇu; it is indestructible; it is the highest abode; it is Vaikuṇṭha, the eternal place. It is nitya (eternal), the highest heaven, the best and the sanātana (ancient). These are the synonymns of the highest abode of Viṣṇu. I shall (now) explain in detail the form of the vibhūti of that Tripād.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED TWENTYEIGHT

Description of the Highest Heaven etc.

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-6. The worlds of the vibhūti of Tripād are said to be innumerable. All they are made of pure sattva, and are called bliss and happiness. All they are eternal, free from change, and void of attachment etc. that are worthy of being abandoned. All are golden, pure, and have the lustre of crores of suns. They are full of all Vedas, are divine, and free from lust and anger. They are resorted to by those who take joy only in devotion to the lotus-like feet of Viṣṇu. They are completely happy due to continuous chanting of the Sāmans. All are of the nature of the five Upaniṣads and have the lustre of the Vedas. All of them are covered with divine men and women full of the Vedas. They are adorned with lakes having water in the form of only the flavour of the Vedas. They have the immobile objects in the form of the holy texts, the codes of law and the Purāṇas. It is not possible for me to describe the full expanse of (these) worlds.

7-13. Only the distance between Virajā and the highest heaven is said (to be covered by them). That place should be enjoyed by those who resort to the unmanifest Brahman. That absolute position which gives joy and happiness due to the experience of one's own self is called *Niśśreyas*, *Nirvāṇa*, *Kaivalya* and *Mokṣa*. Those who are nourished by the happiness due to their interest in devoutly serving the lotus-like feet of the lord of Śrī, and whose intellect is small, desire mokṣa, void of happiness. (But) the high-souled, noble ones who serve the feet of the lord go to

that highest abode of Viṣṇu which gives pleasure (derived) from Brahman. That place of Viṣṇu (called) Vaikuṇṭha is crowded with diverse communities. It is covered with ramparts, splendid rooms and great mansions. In it is a divine city called Ayodhyā. It is covered with ramparts rich in gems, gold and pictures, and with portals. It has four gates and is covered with jewelled principal gates. It is protected by door-keepers like Caṇḍa and Kumuda. At the eastern gate there are Caṇḍa and Pracaṇḍa, and at the western there are Bhadra and Subhadraka.

14-18. Jaya and Vijaya are in the west, and Dhātṛ and Vidhātṛ are at the northern (gate). The other doorkeepers are: Kumuda, Kumudākṣa. Puṇḍarīka and Vāmana. (So also) Śaṅkukarṇa, Sarvanetra, Sumukha, Supratiṣṭhita. These are said to be the regents of the quarters in this city, O you of an auspicious face. It is covered with crores of rows of houses resembling fire (brightness). It is endowed with eternal divine women and men, who have mounted (i.e. stepped into) youth. In the centre of the city there is the charming harem of the god. It is possessed of jewelled ramparts, and adorned with jewelled arched doorways. It has many splendid rooms, principal mansions, and palaces. On all sides it is adorned with bevies of divine celestial nymphs and ladies.

19-24. In the centre is an open hall with a high royal place. It is furnished with a thousand pillars (decked) with rubies, is full of gems and is beautiful. It is full of divine pearls and is adorned with chanting of Sāmans. At its centre is a charming, beautiful throne full of all Vedas. It is always surrounded by deities like Dharma (i.e. Righteousness), full of the Vedas, and by Piety, Knowledge, Great Affluence and Detachment having shining bodies. It is also surrounded by Ṛg, Yajus, Sāman and Atharvan (Vedas) in (due) order, and in a bodily form. Śakti (i.e. power), Ādhāraśakti (i.e. supporting power), Cicchakti (i.e. power of mind) always auspicious, so also the powers of the deities like Dharma are called Śakti. In the centre of it live the rays of Fire, the Sun, and the Moon. So also (there live) Kūrma, the king of serpents, Vainateya (i.e. Garuḍa) and the lord of the triad (of the Vedas). All the Vedas and the hymns have resorted to the condition of a seat?

25. The divine seat, full of all syllables is known as the seat

of practice in abstract meditation. At its centre is an eight-petalled lotus, bright like the rising sun.

26-39a. In it in a bright pericarp the Supreme Being, the lord of gods, is seated with the goddess, O you of a beautiful appearance. He is dark like the petal of a blue lotus. He has the light like that of a crore of suns. He is a young boy, is glossy (or affectionate) and is covered with (i.e. has) delicate limbs. He resembles a full-blown red lotus. He has delicate, lotus-like feet. His eyes are like the full-blown lotuses; is marked with a couple of fine, creeper-like (arched) eye-brows. His nose is good; he is endowed with good cheeks; he has good ears and a lotus-like face. He has teeth resembling pearls. His coral-like lips have a smile on them. He resembles the full moon; his lotus-like face has a charming smile on it. He shines with ear-rings resembling the colour of the young sun. He is adorned with very glossy, dark and curly hair. His hair is tied into a braid having (the flowers of) mandāra and pārijātaka. He is adorned with the Kaustubha (jewel) resembling the rising, morning sun. He shines with a conch-like neck to which garlands and golden wreaths are attached. He shines with very high, large shoulders resembling those of a lion. He is adorned with four plump, round and long arms. He is adorned with rings, bracelets and armlets. His large chest is adorned with good ornaments like the Kaustubha, resembling crores of young suns. He is adorned with a garland of wood-flowers. He has a lovely navel which is the place of origin of the Creator. He is endowed with (i.e. has put on) a soft yellow garment resembling the morning sunshine. His feet are beautiful due to various gems. He shines with two bracelets. He has a row of nails resembling the moon with the moonlight. Acyuta is the treasure of the handsomeness and beauty of a crore of Cupids. He (i.e. his body) is smeared with divine sandal. He is adorned with a divine garland. He shines with his raised arms that have held the conch and the disc. So also (he shines) with the other two hands granting boons.

39b-46. On his left thigh is seated goddess Mahālakṣmī, the great deity. She has a golden complexion and is deer-eyed. She has (put on) a wreath of gold and silver. She is endowed with all (auspicious) marks; and her body has (just) the commencement

of youth (i.e. the body is youthful). She has (put on) jewelled ear-rings. Her hair is dark and curly. Her body is smeared with divine sandal, and she shines with divine flowers. Her fine hair is decked with flowers of mandāra, ketakī and jasmine; her eyebrows are good; her nose is fine; her buttocks are good (i.e. plump); her breasts are plump and raised. She resembles the full moon. Her lotus-like face has a charming smile on it. She is adorned with ear-rings resembling the colour of the young sun. Her complexion resembles gold purified with fire. Her ornaments are made of gold purified by fire. She is endowed with four hands. She is adorned with a golden lotus. She is abounding in various beautiful gems. She is also adorned with necklaces, armlets, bracelets and rings. She shines with a couple of big lotuses held in both her hands. Her hands are graced with golden ornaments called citrons.

47-50. In this way the lord, the great god, always shines in the highest heaven with Mahālakṣmī never leaving him. On his two sides are seated the auspicious Dharaṇī and Nīlā on an auspicious seat. And on the tips of the petals in the eight directions are seated the Śaktis (i.e. the powers embodied) like Vimalā. Vimalā, Utkarṣiṇī, Jñānā, Kriyā, Yogā, so also Prahvī, Satyā and Īśānā, are the (eight) powers of the highest soul. Endowed with all (auspicious) marks, they, holding divine chowries, having moon-like lustre, delight their lord, Acyuta.

51-54. (There are also) bevies of celestial nymphs, and five hundred women. They live in the harem and are adorned with all ornaments. All they have lotuses in their hands, and have lustre like that of crores of fires. They are endowed with all (auspicious) marks, and have faces resembling the moon. The king, the Highest Being, surrounded by them shines. He is also surrounded by Ananta, Garuḍa, and other principal gods like Kārtikeya. He is also surrounded by other servants, eternally liberated. The highest Being, fond of enjoyments and affluence, delights with Ramā.

55-57. O auspicious Girijā, in this way the lord of Vaikuṇṭha shines in the highest place. I shall explain to you his vyūhas (manifestations) and worlds. In the east of the Vaikuṇṭhaloka is the abode of Viṣṇu. In the southeast is Lakṣmī's abode. In the

south is Saṁkarṣaṇa's abode. In the southwest is (the abode) of Sarasvatī. In the west is the abode of Pradyumna. In the northwest is the place of Rati. The land of Aniruddha is in the north.

58. In the northeast is the Śānti-loka. This is the first covering. Then there are twentyfour worlds in a sequence beginning with Keśava.

59-65. The second covering of Vaikuṇṭha is called Śubha. The third auspicious covering consists of the worlds of Matsya, Kūrma, etc. The fourth auspicious covering has the worlds Satya, Acyuta, Ananta, Durgā, Viṣvaksena, Gajānana, Śaṁkha, Padma, Nidhi. In the great directions are the worlds of Ṛg, Yajus, Sāman and Atharvan. So also of Sāvitrī, Garuḍa, Dharma and Sacrifice. The fifth covering is said to be inexhaustible and full of all Speech. So also (there are) the conch, the disc, the mace, the lotus, the sword, the bow, the plough also, and the pestle. The worlds are (thus) equipped with all weapons and missiles. The sixth indestructible covering is said to be consisting of hymns and missiles. Then (there are those) of Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirṛti, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Soma, Īśāna. The seventh is said to be (occupied) by the sages. The Sādhyas, the hosts of Maruts, the Viśvedevas, all are eternal (residents) in the highest abode. So also are other gods.

66-71a. In the material world they are the transient gods. The holy text says: 'The great ones sought out the heaven.' Thus the highest place shines with those liberated, eternal ones fond of enjoyment. The powerful lord shines with the divine queens. The sun does not illumine it; nor does the moon, nor does the fire. Having reached it, the ascetics of acute vows do not return (to the earth). Those who are devoted to the formula consisting of two (divine names) only go to that immutable (place). (It is) not (reached) by means of Vedas, sacrifices, study, gifts, auspicious vows, austerities accompanied by fasts, and other expedients. That eternal, ancient place is to be reached by means of the formula of a couple of names only, so also by means of concentrated devotion or submission.

Pārvatī said:

71b-73. O lord, you have well explained the nature of heaven. How did he dwell in the highest heaven, in the whole territory? For what purpose did he dwell (there)? What is the pur-

pose of (his) sport? How did the lord, the highest god, living in the world consisting of pure sattva live with his vibhūti mixed with rajas and tamas?

Rudra said:

74-75. In his Tripād-vibhūti the glorious highest lord, living with the goddess, and always having his sole enjoyment, is delighted. That great illusion, Prakṛti, the resort of the world, having joined the palms of her hands, extolled the highest god.

Mahāmāyā (*the Great Illusion*) *said*:

76-90. Salutation to you, the dwelling-place of the three worlds. Salutation to you of the form of the universe. Salutation to you, the ancient one. Salutation to you, the cause of the origin of the world. Salutation to (you) the lord of Śrī, Bhū, Līlā; to Nārāyaṇa. Salutation to you the glorious one; to Viṣṇu, having the Śārṅga (bow). Salutation to you of the form of all gods, to Viṣṇu, to the triumphant one; to you of a thousand forms, and to you Ananta. Repeated salutations to Acyuta, the one having no modification, and of a pure, good form, and having a form that has no beginning, middle or end. Salutation to you, Hiraṇyagarbha, Yajña (i.e. Sacrifice), to the highest soul, to the soul of all beings, and to the refuge of all beings. Salutation to Brahman, to Light, to you of the form of the universe, to you of pure feet, to the supreme soul, the highest (being). Salutation to you, Saṁkarṣaṇa, Rudra, the prop of all beings, to Hayagrīva, to the blazing Kāla (i.e. Death), to Viṣṇu. Salutation to you, O man (i.e. the chief deity) of sacrifice, of the nature of the oblations made to deities and dead ancestors. Salutation to the lord of beings, to the Sun of auspicious lustre, to Agni, enjoying oblations offered to gods, and to him, the soul (or of the nature) of sacrifice. Salutation to the procreator, to the cause of creation, maintenance and destruction. Salutation to him who is to be known by the Upaniṣads, and of the nature of four souls. Salutation to you, Brahmā, Viṣṇu. Salutation to Śaṅkara (literally, doing good) also. Salutation to you having the three qualities and the cause of creation, maintenance and destruction. Salutation to you the qualityless one, living in the hearts of all. Salutation to that Viṣṇu, the unmanifest, watching

the worlds. Salutation to Nārāyaṇa, the lord of Śrī, of the form of six qualities, to him full of unending qualities, and the giver of all objects. Salutation to Vāsudeva having the form of five states. Salutation to you having the five and nine different vyūhas (manifestations). Salutation to Yajña-varāha; repeated salutations to Govinda, to the unchanging one, to the pure one, and to the adversary of what is fit to be abandoned. Salutation to you, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Narasiṁha. Salutation to you, Keśava, remover of the affliction of the worlds.

91-96. You, Viṣṇu, are the refuge of all the worlds. O lord of the god of gods, be pleased for the good of all worlds. All the sentient beings, having no support and shelter, stay in me. They are bodiless, formless and without all senses. They are without the practices of religious austerities, and always experience misery. O Keśava, please give them worlds and bodies. O omniscient one, create as before the vibhūti (glory) of your sport. O great lord, see, the entire sentient and insentient, mobile and immobile (world) is deluded by me for (your) sport. O Viṣṇu, create with me the material egg. Having put into the mundane existence, piety and impiety, pleasure, pain, and resorting to me, please indulge in sport. Do not tarry.

Śrī Mahādeva said:

97-101. The highest lord, thus addressed by the deity Māyā, entered her, and started creating the world. He who is called Prakṛti-Puruṣa (Matter and Lord), here is Acyuta. He alone is lord Viṣṇu. He entered the Prakṛti. In the Prakṛti he created Brahmā and (other) beings, resorting to Mahat (i.e. intellect). From this Mahat, Ahaṁkāra (Ego) sprang up. From that Ahaṁkāra, the triad of the constituents (guṇas) came up. From the three constituents the creator of the universe produced the subtle elements. At that moment only the gross elements sprang up from the subtle elements. From Brahman, of the nature of the three constituents, Oṁkāra (i.e. the syllable Om) first came up.

102-107. Vāyu (i.e. air) sprang from Ākāśa (i.e. ether); from Vāyu, Agni (i.e. fire) came up. From Agni, water sprang up; and from water the eaṛth is said to have sprung up. The elements—ether and others—were created one after another. Their qualities—sound, touch, colour, taste and odour (were

produced). The great lord, having created and taken the guṇas one after another, and having mixed them up, created the very great egg of the world and those that merged there, which are fourteen in number. In it Viṣṇu created gods like Brahmā, divinities, lower animals, human beings and four kinds of immobile (objects). Then in him having lotus-like eyes he created the great creation. There, the former (souls) remaining in Prakṛti, are born from him in the stocks of gods etc. in accordance with their former deeds.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED TWENTYNINE

A Description of Viṣṇu's Vyūhas

Pārvatī said:

1. Tell me in detail about the excellent creation of gods. How were the ancient ones like Brahmā, the best in heaven, were born? Tell me also in detail about the incarnations of the lord.

Rudra said:

2-7. Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth were created in due succession. Brahmā created the unfathomable ocean of water among them. In this which had become an ocean, Viṣṇu, taking all the beings, slept the sleep at the end of a yuga, on a leaf of a fig-tree in the water that was his Māyā. Desiring to create the world, he had the sleep at the end of a yuga. Madhusūdana (i.e. Viṣṇu) enjoyed for a long time with that Māyā. On her he generated the excellent Time. So also the divisions of Time like Kalā, Kāṣṭhā, and of the form of a fortnight, a month etc. At that time the lotus in the form of Viṣṇu's navel, which was of the shape of a bud, began to expand. The very bright one was the origin of the world. There the very intelligent Brahmā sprang up. He, desiring to create the world, and impelled by the quality of rajas, praised the highest god having his sleep at the end of the yuga.

Brahmā said:

8-15. Salutation to you, Viṣṇu, the cause of creation, maintenance, and destruction, to you adorned with the ornament of the world, to you the affluent one and of the form of the universe. Salutation to god Brahmaṇya (i.e. the creator), beneficial to cows and brāhmaṇas and beneficial to the world; repeated salutations to Kṛṣṇa, to Govinda. Salutation to (you) of the form of Pradhāna (i.e. Prakṛti) and Time, to the Highest Being, the god. Salutation to (you) of the form of the visible world and not having the form of it. Repeated salutations to Nārāyaṇa, Viśva, the lord of the universe, to the lord of Śrī, Bhū, Nīlā, to Brahman, the highest soul. Salutation to Vāsudeva, of the form of the universe and having the Śārṅga bow, to the lord of the triad (of the Vedas), to Hari, of the form of the lord of the universe. Salutation to you, perfect with endless auspicious qualities. When you, full of the world, sleep, the entire world sleeps. O lord of the world, in the visible world, everything mobile and immobile is covered (by you). You alone are the cause, the agent, and the effect due to the three constituents (viz. sattva, rajas, tamas). You alone are the creator, the one who meditates, and the maker. You remaining in the pure sattva (quality) keep awake. Whence can you have sleep? O god, worlds, the ancient ones, have abided in you.

Śiva said:

16-19. Thus addressed by Brahmā, the highest god Viṣṇu, freed from his sleep at the end of the yuga, got up from that bed. The inconceivable Acyuta, the lord of the worlds, having controlled his sleep at the end of the yuga, commenced creating the world at that moment. Having thought, the Highest Being then created the entire world. Then the lord created in the lotus of his navel all the worlds, the golden egg lying in the water, the seven islands limited by oceans and having land and mountains, with the frying pan (like) egg.

20-24. The lord, Viṣṇu, took his place in the egg. Then with his mind devoted to the supreme spirit, Brahmā meditated upon Viṣṇu. At the end of the meditation a drop of perspiration was produced from his forehead. That drop, of the shape of a bubble, in a moment fell on the earth. O you of an excel-

lent face, I, having three eyes, a trident, and adorned with the crown of the matted hair, was born from that bubble. With modesty I asked the lord of gods: "What shall I do?" Then god Viṣṇu, with delight, thus spoke to me: "O Rudra, you will bring about a fierce-looking destruction of the world, (after) actually being (my) portion, viz. Saṁkarṣaṇa, O you of an excellent face."

25-29. O goddess, from that Nārāyaṇa, I, the fearful one, was born. Having entrusted me with the destruction (of the world), Viṣṇu just again produced from his eyes the moon and the sun, that remove darkness. From his ears he produced Vāyu and directions, and Indra and Agni from his mouth. The lotus-eyed one produced Varuṇa (and) Mitra from his nostrils, and all gods with the Sādhyas and hosts of Maruts from his arms. (He produced) gems and herbs from all the pores of his skin. On (i.e. from) his skin (he produced) mountains, oceans and beasts like cows. Brāhmaṇa was created from his face, and kṣatriya from his arms. Vaiśya sprang up from his thighs and śūdra from his feet.

30-39. Having thus created the entire world, remaining insentient, the lord of the universe remained in it in a universal form. As without the power of that Viṣṇu it did not have winking, therefore, the ancient Viṣṇu alone is the life of the entire world. He alone, the highest soul, being of an unmanifest nature settled down. Brahmā himself proceeds with creation, maintenance and destruction. That ancient Vāsudeva is full of six qualities. From himself having the qualities (of sattva, rajas and tamas) he made his form, the world, into four. The lord of the form of Pradyumna is endowed with all grandeur. He having obtained the position of the inner controller of the lords of creation, time, and people, properly brings about the creation. Then to the high-souled one he gave the Vedas along with the Itihāsas. Brahmā, the grandsire of the world, the portion of Pradyumna, (thus) born of the portion, brings about the creation and maintenance of the world. Lord Aniruddha, endowed with power and lustre, and having got the position of the inner controller of Manus, kings, time and people looks after the maintenance. Lord Saṁkarṣaṇa, Mahā Viṣṇu, endowed with knowledge and power, after assuming the position of

the inner controller of time, all beings, Rudra and Yama destroys the world.

40-44. Thus the state of the inner-controllership of self consists in his being the innermost soul. Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Narasiṁha, Vāmana, Rāma, Paraśurāma, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Kalki are the ten Vibhavas (incarnations) of Brahman, the highest soul. The group of six qualities is said to exist in Nṛsiṁha, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. The highest state of the god is like one lamp being produced (i.e. lighted) from another lamp. O auspicious Girijā, that is the state of this Viṣṇu. Listen. The highest heaven Vaikuṇṭha, the excellent Viṣṇuloka, his own form Śvetadvīpa, the excellent Milky Ocean are said to be the four-fold Vyūha (manifestation of god) by the great sages.

45-50. The auspicious origin of Vaikuṇṭha is in the covering of water. It is (bright) like a crore of fires. All that is imperishable like Dharma. It is resorted to by fragrant trees like mandāra and fires. It is full of many gems, is divine, and contains crores of aeroplanes. That which is said to be the highest abode has characteristics like those. In that excellent city of Vaikuṇṭha, bright with various jewels there is a charming, excellent abode called Devajayārāma, which has four doors and has golden ramparts and arched doorways. It is guarded by doorkeepers like Caṇḍa and Kumuda and others. It is filled with divine residences full of various jewels. On all sides it is extended up to five thousand billion yojanas. It is filled with crores of mansions as lofty as thousand yojanas.

51-58. It is adorned with divine men and women who have entered youth. The women and men here look splendid with all good marks. They resemble Śrī Viṣṇu in form, and are adorned with all ornaments. They are covered with divine garlands and garments, and are adorned with divine sandal (paste). They, accomplished with eight syllables of the formula (mantra), through devotion for the lord of gods, of sixteen kinds, rejoice (there), O you naturally charming one. Entering his place, they rejoice as liked by their mind. Having gone into it, and remaining with Viṣṇu, they never return. With their souls intact, the auspicious ones in the company of Viṣṇu, the wise ones, always obtain happiness like that of him. (Those) ones of auspicious hearts having here and there entered Viṣṇu's worlds, again ob-

tain heaven, like the beings living in heaven. Like Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata and Saṁkarṣaṇa and others they are also born in Satyaloka according to their desire. Then by that (path) only they go to that eternal, highest place. The devotees of Viṣṇu do not have the bondage due to acts and birth.

59-66. The wise say that being Viṣṇu's servant is liberation. Being bound by the lord of gods is not described as a bondage. Viṣṇu's servants are free from all bonds and from blemishes. All worlds up to that of Brahmā are characterized by returning (i.e. one has to come back to the earth after residing there for some time). They are marked by karmabandha (bondage due to acts), have friends like (i.e. are accompanied by) misery, cause, fear, result in great exertion, and cause the destruction of birth, O goddess. The enjoyment of pleasures by men is (just) like food mixed with poison. The deities, getting angry on seeing men with (the effects of) their (good) deeds exhausted, drop them into the mundane existence, having the bondage due to deeds. Therefore, O goddess, the pleasures in heaven cause trouble in many ways. A meditating sage should avoid it which is transient, fraudulent and mixed with misery. He should always remember Viṣṇu, the medicine destroying the mass of all miseries. Merely by the utterance of (Viṣṇu's) name they obtain the highest position. Therefore, O Gaurī, a wise man should desire (to go to) the heaven of Viṣṇu. With undistracted devotion he should worship the lord, the ocean of pity. There is no doubt that he having all knowledge and virtues does protect him.

67-80. Therefore, having muttered the very pious, auspicious formula of eight syllables, he obtains Viṣṇu's world, giving all desired objects. The glorious Viṣṇu, seated on the jewelled couch (bright) like the rays of a thousand suns, (placed) in a divine hall, shone. The glorious Viṣṇu is seated on a divine lotus-seat, (placed on) a divine golden seat, which is held by Śaktis supporting it, which is full of many jewels, which has many colours; the seat is on the eight-petalled lotus, auspicious like the eight letters of the formula, having the auspicious mystical letter of Lakṣmī, and having the lustre like that of crores of young suns. To his right side is the world's mother, Hiraṇmayī (full of gold). She is holding the divine chowries. She is adorned with divine garlands. With her hands she has held a

pot of jewels, a citron, and a golden lotus. To his right is goddess Pṛthivī (the Earth), bright like the petals of a blue lotus. She is having various ornaments and is adorned with beautiful garments. In her upper hands she has held a couple of beautiful red lotuses. With the other two hands the goddess has held a couple of vessels of corn. Holding divine chowries, the Śaktis like Vimalā who are graced with all (good) marks, are seated on the tips of the petals. Among them is seated glorious Acyuta, Hari. He is adorned with hands having divine ornaments like the conch, the disc, the mace and the lotus, and ornaments like armlets and necklaces. He shines with ear-rings like the sun rising in the morning. The lord, enjoying (himself), served by the eternal gods mentioned before, lives in the eternal city of Vaikuṇṭha in the Satya (world). The rich, eight-syllabled formula takes the wise siddhas and never others to that Viṣṇu's world. O you of an excellent face, I have thus described to you the first Vyūha.

81-86. O you of a good vow, I shall explain to you the second world of Viṣṇu. This world of Viṣṇu is known as eternal and is said to be the best among the worlds. That large, meritorious, pure, auspicious world, full of goodness shines like a thousand mid-day suns (shining) simultaneously. Even at the end of the kalpa that very great world would not merge (into Brahman). It is not possible for me or the gods like Brahmā to see it. On all sides the whole of it is full of the groves of the desire-yielding trees. It is endowed with oblong lakes full of nectar-like water. It is graced with divine lotuses full of gold and jewels. It is covered with crores of divine ornaments resembling lightning. It is graced continually with Sāmans, cooings of cuckoos etc. and with trees and flowers carrying fragrance.

87-90. It is covered by divine women and men aged less than sixteen, rich with the grace of all (good) marks, and almost divine ornaments. Women, with their delighted husbands worship Lakṣmī's lord in charming regions in that land. They always obtain the happiness fit to be obtained through his grace. They sing the great deeds of Kṛṣṇa, giving great joy. Very beautiful, auspicious women, having lotus-like eyes, lotus-like feet, resembling Lakṣmī, having divine garlands and garments sport (there).

91-96. Men, holding conches, discs, maces and lotuses,

adorned with ornaments, having garlands, wearing yellow garments, are there. Due to mutual touch the pleasure of devotion for Viṣṇu and delight of the men and women sporting there, grow day by day. In it is the charming and graced harem of Viṣṇu. It is endowed with sandal, agaru-sandal, camphor, saffron and water. It is all around decorated with many flowers and halls. In it, on a divine, beautiful and soft bed which is covered with a bright cover, which is on the lotus-seat, and which is under the shade of the desire-yielding tree, and which has the covers of flowers, rich in the beauty of divine fragrance, the ancient Viṣṇu, the lord of gods, is seated with goddess Lakṣmī.

97-107. He is like crores of moons. He is adorned with divine ornaments. His face is adorned with a pair of soft nostrils of a fine complexion. He shines with glossy, large and beautiful cheeks. He has dark and curly hair. His eyes resemble petals of a red lotus. He has put flowers of mandāra, ketakī, jasmine and white lotuses on his head. His lips are like glossy bimba-fruits. His lotus-like face has a beautiful smile on it. He shines with rows of teeth that shine like priceless pearls. His body is smeared with haricandana. He is having a mark made with musk. He has lovely elevated shoulders and four long arms. He has beautiful sprout-like hands resembling the japā-flower. He has his broad chest adorned with Śrīvatsa and Kaustubha. He is adorned with very beautiful divine wreaths full of pearls. He is covered with a yellow garment like (the light of) the early morning sun and the moonlight. He is adorned with lotus leaves along with anklets decked with rubies. He is adorned with rows of nails like the moon without a spot. His feet and lotus-like hands are soft like red lotuses and fair. He is adorned with a couple of arms having a conch and a disc. With the other two he has clung Lakṣmī's body to his chest. With her he shines like a cloud to which lightning has clung. His couple of auspicious and soft feet is like gold purified by fire. Here the ancient Viṣṇu, the lord of gods, sports.

108-117a. (Lakṣmī is) like gold purified by fire. She is adorned with all ornaments. She is adorned with very glistening and curved sapphires like the row of the digits of the moon. She is adorned with the divine flowers of mandāra and pārijāta. The ends of her hair are beautified by ear-ornaments, and resemble

bees. With her stout and raised breasts she presses Viṣṇu's chest. She is adorned with ornaments like armlets and necklaces. She, the beautiful wife of the lord of all worlds, is always full of youth (i.e. she is ever young). There she eternally sports with the lord of the worlds. That Vāsudeva only, attracting the minds of all beings, and giving the desired objects to men, plays in this entire world. Around him are the eight powers—the eight bodies of Lakṣmī. (They are) Ramā, Rukmiṇī, Sītā, Padmā, Padmālayā, Śivā, Sulakṣaṇā and Suśīlā; they protect that place (lit. world) with weapons like conches, discs, maces, lotuses and śārṅgas (bows), and with lotus-like arrays formed around. Thus, O you of an auspicious appearance, I have properly and in brief described to you the form of the second (Vyūha). It is not possible to describe it in detail. Those who mutter the twelve-syllabled formula giving pleasure always obtain (this) eternal, auspicious, indestructible (world).

117b-123. The world of Viṣṇu can never be obtained by means of Vedic studies, sacrifices, vows and fasting, except by serving (Viṣṇu). Therefore, a devotee should worship Viṣṇu with an undistracted mind. He obtains the highest divine power, freeing him (self) from the bondage of (i.e. due to) his deeds. O goddess, the second, indestructible Vyūha is said to be like this. O Pārvatī, listen. I shall describe to you the third great Vyūha. O you very intelligent one, on the northern shore of the ocean is the Śvetadvīpa. There Viṣṇu stays to allow his view to the meditating sages like the noble Sanaka. Sanaka, Sananda, the third, viz. Sanātana, so also Sanatkumāra, Jātas, Voḍhu, Pañcaśikha—these very bright meditating sages are the sons of Brahmā. They are detached from all enjoyments, are pure, and are always of pure qualities. They enjoy only the flavour of the pleasure due to seeing the lord.

124-133. Viṣṇu dwells there in the vicinity so that Nara, Nārāyaṇa, etc. who reside in the Śvetadvīpa, should (be able to) see him. In the Śvetadvīpa, resembling crores of suns, bright due to being full of various jewels, resorted to by great meditating sages, and free from fear, there are charming parks (having trees) like pārijāta. (The place is) crowded with santāna-creepers, adorned with sandal-trees containing blooming white and blue lotuses, and reservoirs of water. In it is an auspicious,

charming city called Airāvatī. It shines with many divine halls full of various jewels. It is occupied by divine women and men, and full of many mansions. In it is a harem crowded with jewelled trees. It is covered with many lofty mansions, resembling the young sun. In it is a pavilion which is divine, which is graced with gems and gold, and made fragrant with the fragrance of sandal, agaru-sandal, camphor and saffron. It is adorned with canopies rich in beauty with various flowers. It is crowded with celestial damsels, and graced with the chanting of Sāmans. At the centre there is a throne bright like the sun or fire. In it there is an eight-petalled lotus like another orb of the moon. In it, in the pericarp, is seated Viṣṇu. He is like pure gold, and is adorned with a necklace of pearl.

134-138. He has four powerful hands holding a conch, a disc, a mace and a lotus. He is graced with a necklace, armlets, bracelets and rings. He has lovely feet resembling golden lotuses. He is graced with rows of white nails like santānaka (flowers). He is adorned with youth proper for the age and form of (a lad of) sixteen years. He is graced with an upright, fragrant mark (Ūrdhvapuṇḍra) made with saffron, and the parting line of hair. He is well covered with a white garment resembling the foam of nectar that was churned (out of the ocean). He is graced with white ear-rings made of pearls. He, whose body fascinates the world, is seated on the lotus-seat.

139-145. On his left lap is seated the goddess of a divine form. She, Lakṣmī, is worthy of him in character, good qualities etc. She resembles lotus-filaments, is graced with the advent of youth, is endowed with all (good) marks, and has ornaments of gold purified in fire. She has put on a divine garland and garment; her hair is dark and curly. She, shining with four arms, is adorned with armlets. She shines with pearl-necklaces; her hair is graced with mandāra (flowers). Her nostrils are soft; she is graced with rows of bright teeth. She has put on the mark of musk on her forehead. The tip of her nose is graced with pearls. She has stout and raised breasts like golden pitchers. Her body is smeared with divine saffron. She is graced with a divine garland. The goddess holds in her lotus-like hands a vessel containing garments, a citron, a mirror, a golden lotus. Around Viṣṇu there are these Śaktis (powers) of her, resembling her:

146-150. Īśā, Vāsyā, Mahādevī, Jāhnavī, Kamalālayā, Sāvitrī, Sarvagā, Padmā are said to be (her) Śaktis. Sraddhā, Medhā, Dhṛti, Prajñā, Dhāraṇā, and Śānti, (so also) Śruti, Smṛti, Dhṛti, Medhā, Vṛddhi, Buddhi, Manīṣiṇī, are said to be Lakṣmī's maids, doing all (pieces of) work. The deities like Ananta and Garuḍa are the usual servants. The eternal deities like the Sādhyas, the hosts of Maruts, pleased with enjoyments obtained through his (her?) favour, serve him (her?) in the palaces, mansions, groves and cities. The eternal ones avoiding what should be abandoned and what is fruitless, always and continually play there.

151-153. Those who, full of faith, constantly mutter Viṣṇu's formula, those who are engaged in the Dvādaśī-vow, go to his immutable position. O Girijā, the ancient world of Viṣṇu cannot be reached by means of Vedas, gifts, sacrifices or even by vows. The place of Viṣṇu can be reached by men with undistracted devotion. Therefore, one should always worship Viṣṇu with undistracted devotion.

154-155. One should narrate (his account), (should utter) just his name, should meditate upon him, should always mutter his formula, should devoutly offer oblations to, and propitiate the omnipresent one giving all desired objects. O you of beautiful buttocks (i.e. beautiful one), I have told you about the third Vyūha and nature of the highest soul as described by the ancient ones.

156-168. Hereafter I shall explain (to you) the excellent fourth Vyūha. To protect the gods, he, resembling crores of moons, lies on the extensive, auspicious bed of Ananta, in the Milky Ocean adorned by Indra, and covered by youths like Indra. Padmanābha, Acyuta, Hari is seated on a divine seat. He resembles a dark cloud. His eyes are large like lotus-leaves. He is graced with a crown resembling a crore of suns. He shines with two divine ear-rings, bright with various jewels. He is covered with a yellow garment resembling the early morning sun or the moonlight. He is graced with the palms of his hands and soles of his feet resembling bright red lotuses. He is graced with necklaces, armlets, bracelets and rings. He is adorned with hands having the conch, disc, mace, Śārṅga (bow) and sword. He is graced with the desire-yielding trees rich in good flowers, fruits

and branches. He is graced with the navel-lotus (the place) of the birth and death (i.e. the origin and destruction) of the universe. His body is smeared with yellow sandal. He is adorned with all ornaments. He has tied his very glossy, dark, curly hair into a braid with divine, charming flowers of mandāra, pārijāta etc. He is graced with a soft, high nose and a pair of high shoulders and knees. He is graced with feet having anklets and having gems and corals. He is graced with rows of nails like the spotless moon. His lotus-like face has lips resembling the aśoka-flowers. He is beautified with rows of teeth bright like priceless pearls. He is graced with a smiling face resembling the full moon. He has entered youth. He is glorious. He is bright with tender limbs. He is the refuge of all the people and gives the fruits to all the people.

169-175. The goddess is worthy of him in qualities like beauty, character etc. She resembles gold purified by fire, and has ornaments of gold purified by fire. She is young; has a beautiful form; she is endowed with charm, (good) character and qualities. She has covered herself with a white garment resembling the form of the Milky Ocean. Her hair is decked with the flowers of mandāra, ketakī and jasmine. She has the mark of musk on her forehead. The parting of her hair is graced with a gem. She has the beauty of many complexions. She is adorned with ear-ornaments. She smiles beautifully with her red lips having the light like the coral. She is well graced with glossy hair resembling intoxicated bees. Her waist is slender. Her eyes are large. Her breasts are stout and raised. She has four charming hands. She is adorned with all ornaments. The goddess has held a couple of auspicious golden lotuses in her raised hands. She has remained closely embracing her lord with the other two (hands). With her glances she is constantly looking at the gods.

176-180. O Pārvatī, the gods constantly looked at by the goddess are fortunate. There gods, siddhas, cāraṇas, kinnars, remaining in the hall, and with their eyes full of the tears of joy constantly sing to the goddess. The lord of gods, being praised by the gods like Brahmā, Rudra harassed by the demons, granted fearlessness to the gods. Hari, the lord of all gods, having granted fearlessness to gods, started killing the demons for the protection of the world. O you sinless one, I

have thus explained to you Viṣṇu's fourth Vyūha. O you of an excellent face, what else do you desire to hear? I shall tell it. You are fortunate; you are blessed. You are a devotee of Viṣṇu.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED THIRTY

The Fish Incarnation of Viṣṇu

Pārvatī said:

1-2. O venerable one, please tell me duly taking what form the lord of gods, Viṣṇu, killed the demons. O Śiva, tell me in detail the grandeur of the forms (i.e. incarnations) of the Fish, the Tortoise of (i.e. taken by) the Greatest (lord).

Mahādeva said:

3-11. O goddess, listen with an alert mind. I shall tell (you) the grandeur of Viṣṇu and the nature of his incarnations of the Fish, the Tortoise etc. As from one lamp another is produced (i.e. lighted), so would be the forms of the highest lord. The grand incarnations of the god are said to be auspicious and of various forms. There are also images of the highest lord that are worshipped. Brahmā, due to his being the Creator, is the universal lord and a great joy. Bhṛgu, Marīci, Atri, Dakṣa, and Kardama, so also Pulastya, Pulaha, Giriśa and Kratu are said to be the nine lords, in succession, of the created beings. Venerable Marīci generated Kaśyapa. O you of an auspicious appearance, Kaśyapa had four wives: (They were:) Aditi, Diti, Kadru and Vinatā also. Aditi gave birth to gods of shining appearance. Diti (gave birth) to demonic sons who were Tāmasa by nature. Some very great demons were: Śambūka, Hayagrīva, and the very mighty Hiraṇyākṣa; so also Hiraṇyakaśipu, Jambha, Maya and others. Makara, of a very severe penance, and very powerful, went to Brahmā's world.

12-14. The powerful one, having duped Brahmā, seized the Vedas. Having seized the holy texts he entered the great ocean. Then the whole world became a void, and religious practices got

mixed. There were no studies. There was no offering made to deities. The practices of the castes and the stages of human life were ignored. Then god Brahmā, surrounded by hosts of all gods, went to the Milky Ocean, and seeking refuge of god (Viṣṇu), praised him.

Brahmā said:

15-23a. Favour me, O god, O lord, O you seated on the serpent-couch, O lord of all gods, O soul of all gods, O you full of Vedas, O Acyuta. You are the first seed of the world-tree. In the middle (i.e. in its maintenance) you are superior to all. In the end (i.e. at the time of its destruction) you are Śiva. You move according to your will. You alone sustain the ancient world of the form of sentience. You are the unmanifest, the origin of the elements, the Pradhāna (i.e. the Primordial Matter) and the immutable Puruṣa. You, the Highest Lord, are the original, middle and the final form of the world. You, the Highest Being, are the refuge of all worlds. You are the origin of the beings. You are a great being. You are the cause of the group of the elements. You, possessing a soul and resorting to Ahaṁkāra, are divided into three. You are the origin and the end. You are the great Vāyu (air) that moves everywhere. You are, and you are not, the origin. You are fire, the treasure of lustres. You, the great lord, are the water, the life of all worlds. O you highly intelligent one, you are the earth, the support of the moving. You are the supporter of the earth. You are the rivers, the ocean, and you alone are the origin of everything. You are the divine sage; you are all the beings, O Highest Being. People urged by you only indulge in good or bad (acts).

23b-25. The Vedas, assaulted by the demon, have entered the great ocean. This entire world—immovable and movable—has the Vedas as its support. The Vedas alone are the limits on all sides of all (religious) practices. The gods are eternally satisfied with the Vedas. Therefore, O Keśava, please bring (back) the Vedas.

Śrī Mahādeva said:

26-31. Viṣṇu, the highest lord, thus addressed by Brahmā, resorted to the Fish-form and entered the great ocean. Resorting

to the form of a crocodile, he, honoured by the gods, killed that very fearful demon, after tearing him with the tip of his mouth. Having killed him, and taken all the Vedas, the Vedāṅgas, the Upāṅgas, he, of a great lustre, gave them to that Brahmā. The Vedas seized by the demon, were mixed up with one another. The intelligent lord, of the form of Vyāsa, made them distinct. By Vyāsa, the noble one, the Vedas were separated. Thus, he, with his Fish incarnation, protected all deities. Oh! at that time Lakṣmī's lord made the world free from affliction by giving (back) the Vedas. He, the venerable Vāsudeva, Hari, full of all gods, being extolled by groups of gods and siddhas, and with his feet worshipped by the meditating sages, vanished.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED THIRTYONE

Durvāsas Curses Indra

Śrī Rudra said:

1-5. O dear one, I shall duly explain to you that grandeur of the Fish (incarnation) of Viṣṇu, that is saluted by all people. Listen with a concentrated mind. The very lustrous son of Atri, well known as Durvāsas, is wrathful, agitates all the world, and has (practised) severe penance. He, my portion, the brāhmaṇa sage, always causing fear to all, and the treasure of penance went to the Himālayan surface (i.e. region). He, worshipped by kinnara women, lived there for a year. (Then) the sage, desiring to see Indra, went to heaven. At that time he, of a great lustre, saw Śacī's lord, the great god, mounted on an elephant and being honoured by all gods.

6-9. Seeing that, that Durvāsas, having a severe penance (to his credit), with his mind delighted and full of modesty, gave him the garland of pārijāta (flowers). The lord of the deities, received that garland, and placing it on the head of (his) elephant, went to Nandana (garden). The intoxicated elephant, took the garland with his trunk, pressed it and threw it on the ground. Then that

Durvāsas of a great lustre got angry, and with the fire of his anger ablaze, cursed Indra.

Durvāsas said:

10. Since endowed with the entire prosperity of the three worlds, you are slighting me, therefore, the prosperity of the three worlds will surely he destroyed.

Rudra said:

11-18. Indra thus cursed went back to his city. Then Śrī, the mother of the worlds, vanished in a moment. When Lakṣmī vanished, the three worlds vanished. When she, to whose glance the entire world of the immovable and movable resorts, vanished, everything perished. All gods like Brahmā, gandharvas, yakṣas, kinnaras, fiends, demons, serpents, men and goblins, beasts, birds, insects, all immovable and movable objects, all of them were not looked at by Lakṣmī, that mother of the world. All of them were reduced to poverty and experienced misery. Gods, oppressed by hunger and thirst, and being dispirited, cried. Clouds did not shower. All reservoirs of water were dry. All the trees became dry, and were without flowers and fruits. Then gods, along with fiends, demons and goblins, being oppressed by hunger and thirst, went to Brahmā of unlimited vigour, and said to him, the grandsire, the lord of the god of gods and born in a lotus:

The gods said:

19-21a. O venerable one, the three worlds are oppressed by hunger and thirst. No oblations are offered into fire to a deity. The (three worlds) are without all religious practices. All gods, demons and human beings, oppressed by hunger and thirst, have sought the shelter of you, the protector, the lord of all worlds. O lord of gods, please protect the creatures oppressed by hunger and thirst.

Rudra said:

21b-22a. Hearing these words of (i.e. uttered by) them he who respected others and who was the grandsire of all worlds, being very much pleased, spoke to them all:

Brahmā said:

22b-27. Listen, O all gods, demons, gandharvas and men. All this has come to (us) due to Indra's misdeed. This great, fearful fire of universal destruction has come up. O gods, since that very high-minded Durvāsas became angry, all the three worlds perished due to his anger. The silly one, with his mind full of anger, and excited by anger, has said: "Let the three worlds and Lakṣmī, disappear." Due to his curse goddess Lakṣmī, dear to Viṣṇu, the mother and the supporter of the worlds, the great goddess, disappeared. The mother of the worlds, due to being looked at by whose glance the worlds become happy, did not look at (i.e. cared for) the worlds experiencing misery.

28-32. Therefore, all of us will go to Viṣṇu, the excellent one, staying in the Milky Ocean, and will worship the eternal god. When the lord of gods is pleased, this world will be happy.

Deciding like this in his mind, Brahmā, accompanied by hosts of gods, went to the Milky Ocean with sages like Bhṛgu. On the northern coast of the Milky Ocean, the deities like Brahmā, Rudra etc. worshipped Viṣṇu according to rules laid down for worshipping the god. Muttering the eight-syllabled formula, and the Puruṣa-sūkta, and meditating on him with undistracted minds, they offered oblations to the highest god. They praised him with divine hymns and saluted him in various ways.

33-36. Then the venerable one, being pleased and being praised by great sages, stood within the sight of all gods (i.e. appeared before them). Seeing the mighty lord of all worlds, who was full of all gods, who had mounted upon Garuḍa, who had held a conch, a disc and a mace, who had worn a yellow garment, who had four arms, whose eyes resembled lotuses, who had Śrīvatsa and Kaustubha (marks) on his chest, who was adorned with a garland of wood-flowers, who was graced with a crown, a necklace, armlets and anklets, they praised him with shouts of victory and continually saluted him.

37-38. The revered one kindly said to all the deities: "I am a giver of boons. O gods, choose a boon." Thus he spoke (to them). Hearing these words, all gods led by Brahmā and with the palms of their hands joined, said these words to the god:

The gods said:

39-40. O venerable one, now all these three worlds, along with gods, demons and human beings, are afflicted by hunger and thirst. Therefore, O Viṣṇu, we have sought your shelter. Protect all this world. None else would ever be able (to protect it).

Rudra said:

41. Acyuta, the highest lord, thus addressed by all deities, thought and spoke to these gods led by Brahmā, these words:

The lord said:

42-46. Due to the curse of the son of the sage Atri Lakṣmī disappeared. The world will be endowed with grandeur due to her looking at it with (i.e. casting) her glance. Therefore, O gods, all of you led by Śiva and Brahmā, extract the Mandara mountain, and put it into the Milky Ocean. O gods, making the Mandara mountain encircled by the king of serpents, the churning rod, churn with the (help of) the fiends, gandharvas and demons, the Ocean. Then Lakṣmī will appear for the protection of the world. There is no doubt that you, looked at by her, will be very lucky. Concealed (in the Ocean) in the form of a tortoise I myself shall hold the (Mandara) mountain, and entering with my strength into all gods (I shall make them) stronger.

Rudra said:

47-48. O you of lotus-like eyes, when all the deities were thus addressed by Viṣṇu, they, led by Brahmā, spoke to the lord of gods: "Well, well." Being praised by best gods, and saluted by all the worlds, venerable, glorious Acyuta, the prop and the god of all, looking equally everywhere, vanished.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED THIRTYTWO

The Rise of Goddess Lakṣmī

Śaṅkara said:

1-6. Then all the hosts of gods and the very powerful demons extracted the Mandara mountain and put it into the Milky Ocean. Then the powerful lord Viṣṇu, the creator of the beings, and of unlimited valour, supported, in the form of a tortoise, the mountain. The eternal, immutable, omniscient one, whose body has no beginning, middle or end, who is of a universal form, who is the lord of the worlds fit to be worshipped, supported the excellent mountain with one arm only. Then all gods and demons churned the Ocean, after encircling the Mandara mountain with the lord of serpents. Then when the Milky Ocean was being churned by the very powerful deities for generating (i.e. taking out) Lakṣmī, all the great sages fasted, observed restrictions and also muttered Śrīsūkta.

7-10. The divine excellent brāhmaṇas recited (the hymn Viṣṇu-) Sahasranāma. All the sages who desired to mutter (the formula of) Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa-Viṣṇu, fasted on the Ekādaśī day of the bright fortnight when the great ocean was being churned and muttered the excellent Śrī-hymn. The topmost brāhmaṇas, the best sages meditated upon and worshipped (the deity). Then at that time when the great ocean was being churned, at first there came up the very strong Kālakūṭa poison which was very painful, very fierce, and which was like the fire of universal destruction.

11-15. Seeing (it), all gods and demons, being frightened, fled away. O you of beautiful eyes, then seeing the best gods frightened and fleeing away, I said to them: "O you all hosts of gods, do not be afraid of the poison. I shall drink this strong poison, Kālakūṭa." Thus addressed by me, all the gods, led by Indra and bowing, very much praised me with the words 'Well, Well'. On seeing the strong poison, like a cloud, having come up I meditated in my heart upon the eagle-bannered god Viṣṇu, resembling the rising sun and holding a conch, a disc, and a mace.

16-21. Having meditated (i.e. when I meditated) with a concentrated mind upon that lord along with Śrī and Bhūmi, having

earrings of gold purified by fire, remover of all miseries, and on my having muttered the great hymn of the name and form (of Viṣṇu) along with Mahālakṣmī, all that poison, which was very fierce, which was the first one, which was fearful to all, which was (capable of) destroying all the worlds, was digested (by me) due to the three names of Viṣṇu, the omnipresent one. He who, being restrained, would devoutly mutter the three names of Viṣṇu, viz. Acyuta, Ananta, Govinda, beginning with Praṇava (i.e. Om) and (also) ending with Om, has no fear of death, so also the great fear due to poison, disease and fire. The wise, restrained one, who would mutter the great hymn—the three names—does not have fear of Death; then from where else (can he have it)? Thus with (the muttering of) the three names I drank that poison.

22-24a. Then the gods, pleased and very much amazed, praised me. Having saluted me the gods again churned the Milky Ocean. O beautiful lady, when the ocean was being churned by me and the gods, Jyeṣṭhā Devī, covered with gems, wreaths and garments came up. When the goddess came up, she said: "What should I do?" Then all the hosts of gods repeatedly said to the goddess:

Gods said:

24b-32. We give you the place in the charming interior of the house of those where quarrel takes place. Having inauspicious (qualities), live there. Giving misery and poverty to them who, being liars, always speak harsh words, and who of impure hearts, sleep in the evening, stay in their house. There is no doubt that you will always stay at that place where there will be potsherds, hair, ash, bones, fire of the chaff or charcoal. O you inauspicious one, always live, along with Kali, in that house which is marked by potsherds, bones, ash, hair etc. O great goddess, resort to him who, the stupid one, very much covered with sin, sips water without cleaning his feet. People cleaning their teeth with chaff, charcoal, potsherd, stone, sand, (a piece of) garment, (or of) hide, will be (i.e. are) mean. O goddess, causing poverty, always live in the house of those who eat sesamum, flesh of animals struck with a poisoned weapon, kaliṅga, pot-herb, garlic, mushrooms, viḍ-varāha, bilva, kośātaki-fruit, bottle-gourd, and onions.

Rudra said:

33-45. Having thus ordered Jyeṣṭhā, dear to Kali, all the gods, well-composed, again churned the Milky Ocean. O you of an auspicious face, then goddess Vāruṇī came up. Ananta, the lord of serpents, took her of beautiful eyes. Then Surā (spirituous liquor), adorned with all ornaments, came up. She graced with all (auspicious) marks became the wife of Garuḍa. Then bevies of celestial nymphs and divine and very strong gandharvas endowed with handsomeness and engaged in sweet singing, came up. Then Airāvata came up. Then the horse Uccaiḥśravas came up. Then came up Dhanvantari, Pārijāta and Surabhi giving all desired objects. Indra with a pleased mind accepted all these. Then in the morning when the sun rose on the Dvādaśī day, and when the Ocean was again churned by gods led by Indra, Śrī, Mahālakṣmī, the auspicious goddess of all the worlds, being praised by great sages with pleasing faces, came up. She resembled a crore of young suns, and was adorned with golden armlets. She was seated on a golden lotus and was graced with all (auspicious) marks. Her eyes were large like lotus-petals. Her hair was dark and curly. Her body was smeared with divine sandal. She was adorned with divine flowers. She had (put on) all divine ornaments decked with various jewels. Her waist was slender. She was the mother of the world. Her breasts were stout and raised. She had four hands. Her eyes were large. Her face was like the full moon. She held with her lotus-like hands adorned with all ornaments, a pot of jewels, citron, and an auspicious couple of golden lotuses. On her bosom she wore a garland of unfaded lotuses. They saw that great goddess, desiring the good of all worlds.

46-54. Seeing her, the controller of all beings, the mother having a lotus-garland, Nārāyaṇī, world's mother, having a place in the heart of Viṣṇu, all the deities were pleased. In heaven groups of gods beat drums strongly. The sylvan deities continuously showered flowers. The chief gandharvas sang and bevies of celestial damsels danced. So also auspicious breezes blew. The sun was very bright. The fires burnt noiselessly; the ten directions were bright. Then from the Milky Ocean the Moon came up. He, Soma (i.e. the Moon), the brother of the mother (Lakṣmī), was pleasant. The Moon, the lord of the stars, became the maternal

uncle of the world. Then Tulasī, Viṣṇu's wife, purifying the world, and the mother of the world came up for the worship of Viṣṇu. Then all the gods, with their minds pleased and all desires fulfilled, put (back) the (Mandara) mountain as before (in its own place), and led by Śiva and Brahmā, approached the mother (i.e. Lakṣmī). Having praised her with the (hymn Viṣṇu-) sahasranāma, they recited the text of the Śrīsūkta. Then, O goddess, she, being pleased, said to all gods:

Śrī said:

55a. O best gods, ask for a boon. Well-being to you. I am a giver of boons.

Rudra said:

55b. With their figures bent and palms of their hands joined, the gods said to Lakṣmī:

The gods said:

56-59a. O Kamalā, O goddess, O you dear to all gods, be pleased. Always rest on Viṣṇu's chest. Never go away (from there). O goddess, always look after the three worlds. O highest goddess, you, to whose glances the entire immovable and movable world resorts, are eternal. Gods, looked at (with favour) by you, are powerful. You are the mother of gods like Rudra. (Their) splendour is due to your glance. We desire this, O goddess. Salutation to you, O mother of the world.

Rudra said:

59b-62a. Thus addressed by all deities, the great goddess, the mother of the world, the one dear to Viṣṇu, said to the gods: "Let it be so." Then Viṣṇu, lord of Śrī, holding a conch, a disc and a mace, manifested himself as before in the Milky Ocean. Then the gods, having saluted Viṣṇu, praised him. All the auspicious (gods) with their faces delighted and with the palms of their hands joined said:

The gods said:

62b-63a. O lord of all, accept the goddess Lakṣmī, never leaving you, as your dear queen for the protection of the world.

Rudra said:

63b-70. Having said like this, all gods led by Brahmā and along with the sages, and with their eyes full of tears of joy, placed the goddess and the god, adorned with divine garments, divine wreath and various jewels, on a divine seat, full of various jewels and resembling the young sun, and worshipped Viṣṇu seated with Lakṣmī. They also worshipped the goddess with sandal, incense, lights, and offerings of eatables full of nectar, and with extraordinary fruits. Goddess Tulasī, delicate and auspicious, came up from the nectar. With that they properly worshipped Lakṣmī's couple of feet. Gods overcome with tears full of joy, having gone round him, keeping him to their right, three times, and having saluted him, praised him with eulogies. Then venerable Viṣṇu was pleased. With Lakṣmī, the lord gave them boons desired (by them). Then gods, men and others were very much delighted. They were purified by Lakṣmī's glances. They had profuse grains and wealth. Being extremely healthy, they obtained great happiness.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED THIRTYTHREE

Ekādaśī as a Day of Fast

Śiva said:

1. Then for the good of all the world the lord along with the goddess, delighted in heart, spoke to the gods and great sages:

The lord said:

2-8a. O all sages and deities having great power, listen. Ekādaśī is very meritorious and destroys all calamities. You have observed it as a day of fast in order to see Lakṣmī. Dvādaśī, dear to me, is always more meritorious than that. Since today all those men who observe a fast on the previous (i.e. Ekādaśī) day, and who, when the sun has risen on the Dvādaśī (day), worship with great faith and devotion me along with Lakṣmī and Tulasī,

are freed from bondage and reach my position. Those men who do not worship me, the Highest Being, on Dvādaśī, are sinners, and are deluded by my Māyā. My Māyā, difficult to cross, throws the sinners, the most sinful ones, bound by objects of senses, averse to my worship and going (i.e. fated to go) to hell, into the continuous mundane existence.

Rudra said:

8b-11. Speaking like this, the lord, the highest soul, the ancient one, being praised by the sages, went to Lakṣmī's place. The highest lord, along with goddess Lakṣmī of large eyes, remained near (the gods) on the bed of Śeṣa in a hall resembling the sun in the Milky Ocean for appearing before the gods. Then all the hosts of gods, devoutly worshipping the ancient Tortoise-form (of the lord), praised him with delighted minds. Then lord Viṣṇu, of the form of Tortoise, was pleased.

The lord said:

12a. O best gods, ask for a boon that is in your mind.

Rudra said:

12b-13a. Then all the hosts of gods, with their minds full of joy, and joining the palms of their hands, said to Viṣṇu of the form of Tortoise:

The gods said:

13b-14a. O you very powerful one, O lord of gods, to help Śeṣa and the quarter-elephants, please sustain the earth having seven islands.

Rudra said:

14b-19. Saying, "Let it be so", the lord, the creator of the worlds, with his mind pleased, sustained the earth covered by the seven islands. Then gods with gandharvas, fiends, demons and human beings, permitted by the great sages, went to their respective world. O you of an excellent complexion, since then all gods led by Brahmā, so also siddhas, human beings, meditating saints, best sages, honouring Viṣṇu's order devoutly fasted on the Ekādaśī (day) and duly worshipped Viṣṇu on the Dvādaśī

(day). O you beautiful one, I have told you all about the origin of goddess (Lakṣmī); so also about the splendour of Viṣṇu in his Tortoise-form. What else do you desire to hear?

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED THIRTYFOUR

How to Observe the Vow of Dvādaśī

Pārvatī said:

1-2. O lord, I desire to hear about the rule about Dvādaśī, and about (how) the worship of Viṣṇu should be done on that (day). O great lord, due to your love for me (i.e. since you love me), tell me in detail the power of Ekādaśī that removes all sins of men.

Mahādeva said:

3-8. O goddess, listen. I shall tell you the rule about Dvādaśī. Merely by (one's) remembering it, Viṣṇu would be pleased. Men fasting on Ekādaśī when it has come, are freed from all sins, and reach the highest position of Viṣṇu. By worshipping Viṣṇu on Dvādaśī all the sin (of one) committed knowingly or unknowingly perishes in a moment. Thousands of horse-sacrifices and hundreds of Vājapeya sacrifices do not equal even a sixteenth part af Ekādaśī-fast. The excellent Dvādaśī (vow) gives merit, wealth, desired objects and salvation also. It fulfils all desires of men. O you of beautiful eyes, there is nothing else that saves (one) from sins like Ekādaśī. There is no other vow like that of Ekādaśī.

9-16. He who, ignoring Ekādaśī, would observe some other vow, asks for begging after abandoning great kingdom which is in his hand. O dear one, all the sin that is committed with the eleven (sensory and motor) organs would perish by means of a fast on the Ekādaśī (day). O you of an excellent face, the Purāṇas repeatedly announce: "One should not eat, one should not eat, when the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu has come." O you of an excellent complexion, there are always

certain articles of food prohibited for the castes and stages of life. The more so on the Ekādaśī of the bright half and the dark half (of a month). There is no doubt that the Ekādaśī-fast should be observed. If the anniversary day of the death of one's mother and father is on the day on which Ekādaśī falls, the presents should be given on the Dvādaśī day, but never on the Ekādaśī day. Dead ancestors and gods do not eat censured food. On an Ekādaśī day one should not eat, should never drink liquor, should not hurt a brāhmaṇa. These three (sins) are said to be equal (in gravity). Therefore, on a pure (i.e. unmixed) Ekādaśī (day), one should observe a fast. In the three conditions, with speech, body and deeds, an effort should be made (for observing a fast).

17-24. Ekādaśī mixed with Daśamī should be carefully avoided. (If Daśamī continues) at the time of dawn (on the Ekādaśī day), it (i.e. the Ekādaśī) would be mixed with Daśamī. Leaving it (i.e. that Ekādaśī day) he should, without (further) thought, observe a fast on the pure (i.e. unmixed) Dvādaśī. O goddess, if a part of Ekādaśī continues at the sunrise on the Trayodaśī day, then Dvādaśī remains on that day also. At dawn he should perform all rites. Even if a part of Dvādaśī is there, breaking the fast (on that day) is recommended. In this case one should ignore even a pure Ekādaśī. There is no doubt about it. Even if a part of the Ekādaśī continues on the Dvādaśī, when the sun has risen, one should ignore the entire Ekādaśī (on the previous day) and observe a fast on that (Dvādaśī) day. Having decided the rite like this, one should observe a fast on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu. Avoiding four meals, one in the evening of the first day, another in the morning of the last (i.e. the third) day, and two on the middle (i.e. the second) day, one should observe a fast. On the Daśamī day he should eat once (only), avoid (sexual) union with his wife, sleep on the ground, and should remain pure on the next day.

25-32. With his body smeared with (the pulp of) the dhātrī-fruit, he should bathe and offer the sandhyā (prayer). Intent on (observing) a fast, he should worship Viṣṇu at night. A devotee of Viṣṇu should not see, talk with or touch a heretic, one doing a prohibited act, a fallen person or a cāṇḍāla. A brāhmaṇa who is not devoted to Viṣṇu is called a heretic. One who has given up

the tuft of hair on the crown of the head and the sacred thread is said to be one remaining (i.e. persisting) in (doing) prohibited acts. One having (committed) major and minor sins is said to be fallen. One belonging to the lowest caste is said to be *śvapaca*. This proper decision is taken by the Vedas. Having worshipped the lord of gods, one should keep awake. With sandal, flowers, lights, garments, ornaments, auspicious mutterings, hymns, salutations, one should devoutly worship (Viṣṇu) at night. Then in the morning having bathed according to the proper rule with water mixed with Tulasī, and having gratified the dead ancestors and deities, one should worship Viṣṇu, the lord of the world along with Lakṣmī, with tender Tulasī-leaves, and fragrant flowers. Then one hundred and eight times he should wave lights (before Viṣṇu's idol).

33-39. To both of them (i.e. Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī) he should offer a garland made of lotuses. He should also offer them incense, light, articles of food and tāmbūla. One should offer (them) charming food of rice boiled in milk along with sugar, and should offer a tāmbūla with camphor. He should devoutly salute (them) while going round them. One hundred and eight times he should offer oblations into fire with ghee, offering rice boiled in milk with the recital of every ṛc, with (the recital of) the Puruṣa-sūkta and Lakṣmī-sūkta. He should feed the brāhmaṇas, and controlled in speech he himself should also eat. He should pass that great day by the recital of the Purāṇas etc. That night he, observing celibacy, should sleep on the ground. That lord of Kamalā, being thus worshipped on the Dvādaśī day, is pleased in a moment, and the lord certainly gives all desired objects. O goddess, I have thus told you the excellent vow of Dvādaśī. What else do you desire to hear? I shall tell that to you.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED THIRTYFIVE

The Birth of Heretics

Śrī Pārvatī said:

1-2b. O lord, you told me that one should avoid conversation with heretics, and that it is more censurable than (talking to) a cāṇḍāla. (Tell me) of what kind they are said to be, and with what signs they are marked.

Rudra said:

2c-12a. Those who, deluded by ignorance, describe any other deity as being superior to Viṣṇu, the lord of the world, are said to be heretics. Those who use skulls, apply ash, use bones, have non-Vedic marks, have matted hair and bark-garments though they do not belong to the hermit-stage of life are (said to be) heretics. Those brāhmaṇas who are without such marks dear to Viṣṇu as conches, discs, ūrdhvapuṇḍra (upright sectarian marks on the forehead) are said to be heretics. That brāhmaṇa who does not follow the practices laid down in the holy texts and codes of laws should be known as a heretic and is condemned among all people. Those that have no devotion for the lord are said to be heretics. He who is free in all acts (i.e. performs all acts as he likes) and offers oblations into fire and gives gifts directed to deities (other than) Viṣṇu, the enjoyer of the fruit of all sacrifices and the deity of the brāhmaṇas, and who independently does all great acts laid down in the Vedas, should be known as a heretic. He who looks upon god Viṣṇu as equal to other deities like Brahmā, Rudra, would always be (called) a heretic. That brāhmaṇa who, in the three conditions, does not recognise Viṣṇu by means of speech, body and acts, would be a heretic. What is the use of saying much in this regard? Those brāhmaṇas who are not devotees of Viṣṇu, should never be asked (any question), should never be talked to and should never be seen.

Pārvatī said:

12b-15a. O lord, O best of gods, I am asking (you) a secret. Through love for me tell it. There is a great doubt. The holy texts have condemned wearing (i.e. using) skulls, (applying) ash and

(wearing) hide. You wear (i.e. use) them. (Then), O god, for what purpose is it condemned? O lord of gods, O you highly intelligent one, through fickleness of (i.e. natural to) women I am asking it. It may be that due to your great power what is told ought not to be done by you. (But) you have not formerly told me in detail what ought not to be done. Therefore, O lord, please pardon me my question.

Vasiṣṭha said:

15b-17a. Thus by the goddess Śiva was asked in a lonely place, free from people. He told her the great secret, viz. whatever he did.

Śiva said:

17b-21a. O goddess, listen. I shall tell you that secret which is very wonderful. O goddess, you should not speak what I have told you among people. O you of a good vow, I shall tell it to you since your body is not separate from mine. In the age of Svāyambhuva (Manu) in olden times there were great demons like Namuci, who were very powerful, very valorous, very strong and great heroes. All of them were devoted to Viṣṇu, were pure, and free from all sins. They followed the practices (laid down) in the triad of the Vedas. All gods, being frustrated, led by Indra, and overcome by fear, approached Viṣṇu and sought his shelter.

Gods said:

21b-22a. O Keśava, you alone can conquer these great demons who cannot be conquered by all gods, and who have washed off their sins with penance.

Mahādeva said:

22b-25. Hearing these frightful words of the gods, Viṣṇu, Puruṣottama, consoled those regents of the quarters, and said to me:

The lord said:

O Rudra, O you of mighty arms, O you best god, for deluding the enemies of gods prepare a course of conduct to be followed by

heretics. Narrate to them the dark Purāṇas (i.e. Purāṇas that will take them astray). O you very intelligent one, also fashion confusing holy texts. There will be brāhmaṇas and great sages who have given themselves away to me.

26-33. Approaching them through devotion for me, tell the vicious ones: Kaṇāda, Gautama, Śakti, Upamanyu, Jaimini, Kapila, Durvāsas, Mṛkaṇḍu, Bṛhaspati, Bhārgava and Jāmadagnya are the ten (?) vicious sages. Desiring to do the good of the world, approach them with your power of suggestion (bhāvaśakti?). By your power increased in viciousness infused into them they will be vicious in a moment. There is no doubt about it. Those brāhmaṇas with greater viciousness caused by you, will narrate the vicious Purāṇas and doctrines in the three worlds. O god, you yourself, wearing the marks like a skull, hide, ash, bones, fully delude the people in the three worlds. So also you, Śiva, prepare the Pāśupata order with its divisions like Kaṅkāla, Śaiva, Pāṣaṇḍa and Mahāśaiva; so also properly prepare the doctrine having no particular marks and outside the Vedic fold. All the mean men will wear ash, bones etc. and will be insensible. The vicious ones will describe you as the highest (god).

34-36a. Taking to their doctrine all the ancient demons will be averse to me in a moment. There is no doubt (about it). O very powerful Rudra, in my incarnations I too shall worship you in every age to delude the vicious ones. Having upheld this doctrine, they will undoubtedly fall.

Mahādeva said:

36b-37. O you beautiful one, having heard what Viṣṇu had said, I, though having a very large mouth (i.e. though a good speaker) became helpless then. Then having saluted the highest god, I said:

38-43. "O god, if I do what you have said on the earth, it will certainly lead to my destruction. O Viṣṇu, it is possible for me to carry out this mission. Your command is not to be disobeyed. This is very painful." O goddess, when I spoke like this, Viṣṇu, having again cheered me up, said: "Let this not lead to your destruction. Do as I order you for the good of the deities. O best god, I shall also tell you about the means for your livelihood." Then with compassion he gave me his thousand names

(i.e. the hymn called *Viṣṇusahasranāma*): "Installing me in your heart, mutter my indestructible formula. The very great, six-syllabled formula is said to be Brahman, the emancipating one. Those who worship me with devotion obtain salvation. There is no doubt about this.

44-46. (Salutation to) him dark like the petal of a blue lotus, having eyes like lotus-petals, holding a conch, a disc, and the Śārṅga bow, and adorned with all ornaments. (To him) having put on a yellow garment, having four arms, the dear lord of Jānakī. 'Salutation to Śri Rāma': this excellent formula should be muttered. It removes all sins, and gives salvation even to sinners. Muttering this formula everyday you will be free from blemishes.

47-51a. All that sin produced in you due to having (applied) ash and having bones, has all become auspicious due to the auspicious utterance of my formula. O best god, being gratified I shall destroy all sin. O you of a good vow, devotion to other god than me will not come up. Worship me, the lord, the Supreme Being, mentally in your heart. Obey my order. Due to my love, all this will be auspicious for you." Having thus ordered me, O goddess, he dismissed the hosts of gods. The gods, dismissed by him went to their own abodes. Then gods, led by Indra, requested me.

Indra and others said:

51b. O god, quickly do that beneficial act as told by Viṣṇu now.

Mahādeva said:

52-56. O auspicious one, for the good of the gods, I took to the way of the heretics, and had skulls, hides, ash and bones. O auspicious one, as told by Viṣṇu, I prepared the vicious Purāṇas and the heretic Śaiva doctrines. O sinless one, having entered through my power, Gautama and other brāhmaṇas I proclaimed the texts outside the Vedic fold. Resorting to this doctrine, all the wicked demons became averse to the lord (i.e. Viṣṇu), and were enveloped in viciousness. Applying ash to their bodies, covered with (i.e. having) very severe penance, they worshipped me only with flesh, blood and sandal.

57-64. On receiving from me grants of boons, they were haughty with pride and power. They were very much attached to objects of senses, and were full of lust and anger. They, void of goodness and powerless, were then defeated by the hosts of gods. Fallen from all righteous paths, they will go to a mean position in (due) time. Those who, bereft of righteous paths, move on the earth by resorting to this doctrine of mine, always see (i.e. go to) hell. O goddess, (this) my course, that is censured, is thus (followed by me) (only) for the good of the gods. Following Viṣṇu's order I have (applied) ash and (use) bones. O goddess, this is an external mark intended for deluding the foes. In the heart however, I, always meditating upon god Viṣṇu, just mutter that emancipating formula, telling about Brahman. It is like the (hymn) Sahasranāma of Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa. O auspicious one, constantly muttering the great six-syllabled formula which increased the Raghu-race, we constantly obtain that Brahman which is filled with the nectar of constant joy, which is permanent happiness. O you of an auspicious face, I have told you all this that you had asked. What else do you desire to hear? Ask me that with affection.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED THIRTYSIX

Characterization of Various Texts and Doctrines as Sāttvika, Rājasa and Tāmasa

Pārvatī said:

1. O sinless one, tell me about the vicious texts which were composed by the brāhmaṇas bereft of devotion to the lord. O lord of gods, tell me their names in a sequence.

Rudra said:

2-4. O goddess, listen. I shall tell you about the vicious texts in a sequence. By merely remembering them even the wise ones would be deluded, First I myself proclaimed the Śaiva, Pāśupata (texts) etc. Hear about the ones which were proclaimed

by the brāhmaṇas into whom my power had entered, after that: Kaṇāda proclaimed the great Vaiśeṣika text.

5-7. Similarly Gautama (proclaimed the doctrine of) Nyāya, and Kapila (proclaimed) Sāṁkhya. Dhiṣaṇa (Bṛhaspati) in the same way (proclaimed) the much censured Cārvāka (doctrine); Viṣṇu of the form of Buddha proclaimed the false Buddhist doctrine and those of the naked and wearing dark blue garments for the destruction of the demons. The doctrine of Māyā (illusion) is a wicked doctrine and said to be pseudo-Buddhist. I myself, of the form of a brāhmaṇa, proclaimed it in Kali (age).

8-12. It shows the meaninglessness of the words of the holy texts and is condemned in the world. In this (doctrine) only the giving up of one's own duties is expounded. And that is said to be religiousness by those who have fallen from all duties. I have propounded the identity of the Highest Lord and the (individual) soul. I stated this Brahman's nature to be qualityless. O goddess, I myself have conceived, for the destruction of the worlds, and for deluding the world in this Kali age, the great doctrine resembling the purport of the Vedas, (but) non-Vedic due to the principle of Māyā (illusion) (present in it). By my order formerly Jaimini propounded the great doctrine of Pūrva Mīmāṁsā, stating godlessness and making the Veda meaningless.

13-17. O Girijā, know from me the vicious doctrines. I shall also narrate the names of the vicious Purāṇas* in succession: Brāhma, Pādma, Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, so also Bhāgavata. So also Nāradīya and Mārkaṇḍeya as the seventh. Āgneya is said to be the eighth, and Bhaviṣya to be the ninth. Brahmavaivarta is said to be the tenth, and Liṅga to be eleventh. Vārāha is said to be the twelfth and Vāmana the thirteenth. Kaurma is said to be the fourteenth and Mātsya the fifteenth. Gāruḍa is said to be the sixteenth, and Skānda to be the seventeenth. The eighteenth is Brahmāṇḍa. (These are) the Purāṇas in succession.

18-22a. Know from me that Mātsya, Kaurma, Laiṅga, Śaiva, so also Skānda and Āgneya are tāmasa (vicious). O you of

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*The immediately following list is not actually that of the vicious Purāṇas but of the Purāṇas in general. The vicious six Purāṇas follow this list of eighteen Purāṇas. The word 'tāmasa' in this verse is not appropriately used. (Ed.)

an auspicious appearance, the Purāṇas, viz. Vaiṣṇava, Nāradīya, so also the auspicious Bhāgavata, similarly Gāruḍa, Pādma, Vārāha should be known to be sāttvika (or virtuous). Know from me that Brahmāṇḍa, Brahmavaivarta, Mārkaṇḍeya, Bhaviṣya, Vāmana and Brāhma are rājasa (endowed with the quality of passion). The sāttvika ones are said to give salvation and are always auspicious. Similarly, O goddess, the tāmasa are said to be the cause of (i.e. lead one to) hell.

22b-27. Similarly Smṛtis endowed with the three qualities are proclaimed by the sages. O you of an auspicious appearance, they are sāttvika, rājasa and tāmasa. Vāsiṣṭha, Hārīta, Vyāsa, Pārāśara, Bhāradvāja and Kāśyapa are said to sāttvika, giving (i.e. leading to) salvation and auspicious. Yājñavalkya Ātreya, so also Taittira, Dākṣa and Kātyāyana and Vaiṣṇava are rājasa, giving (i.e. leading to) heaven, and auspicious. Gautama, Bārhaspatya, Sāṁvarta, Yama, Sāṁkhya and Auśanasa are said to be tāmasa, and giving (i.e. leading to) hell. What is the use of talking much in the case of the Purāṇas and the Smṛtis also? The tāmasa do lead to hell. A wise one should avoid them. As the occasion has come, I have told you all the auspicious doctrines. Listen. I shall tell you about the nature of the remaining birth (i.e. of the other incarnations) of Viṣṇu.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED THIRTYSEVEN

The Boar Incarnation of Viṣṇu

Śrī Rudra said:

1-3. Kaśyapa's two sons, Hiraṇyaka and Hiraṇyākṣa were very powerful. They, the two sons of Diti, were great warriors and the lords of the demons. In Śvetadvīpa they were with Viṣṇu (as his doorkeepers) named Jaya and Vijaya. O goddess, (once) the two very powerful ones prevented the greatest meditating sages who were eager to see Viṣṇu. The two best, very powerful gods, the doorkeepers were cursed by them.

Sanaka and others said:

4a. O servants of the god, leave (this place) and be gone to the earth.

Rudra said:

4b-6a. Having cursed them like this, the best sages remained there. The god (Viṣṇu) having come to know the affair called them (i.e. the sages) and the two (doorkeepers) also, to whom, after they had stood, the lord, the cause of the beings, said:

The lord said:

6b-8a. O you very powerful ones, you have done a great wrong to the noble (sages). O doorkeepers, you cannot pass it over. If you desire to have seven existences, then you will be my sinless devotees. If you want to remain as my enemy, then you will have three existences.

Rudra said:

8b. Thus addressed, the very powerful Jaya and Vijaya said to the highest god:

Jaya and Vijaya said:

9-10a. O you who respect others, we can't go to (and live on) the earth for a long time. Therefore, know that we shall go to (i.e. have) those existences causing enmity (for you). O god, killed by you only, we shall come near you.

Rudra said:

10b-14. Having spoken like this, the two very powerful doorkeepers were born from the womb of Diti, (the wife of) Kaśyapa. Hiraṇyakaśipu was the elder and Hiraṇyākṣa the younger. Both of them were well-known in the world. Both were very powerful and haughty due to their might. That Hiraṇyākṣa of an immeasurable body and very haughty removed, with his thousands of arms, the earth along with mountains, oceans, islands, and all living beings. Having removed it out and put it on his head he entered the lower world. Then all the hosts of gods, afflicted by fear, cried.

15-19. They sought the shelter of Nārāyaṇa, Viṣṇu. Then

knowing that wonder, he, Viṣṇu, the holder of a conch, a disc, and a mace, took up the Boar-form, existing everywhere and having no beginning, middle or end. The highest lord full of everything, having hands and feet on all sides, having large fangs and arms, struck the demon with one fang. The mean son of Diti, with his huge body pounded, died. Seeing the earth fallen (from the demon's head), he lifted it with his fang, and putting it on Śeṣa's head as before, took up the form of a Tortoise.* Seeing great Viṣṇu of the form of the hog, all deities and sages, with their bodies bowed with devotion, praised him.

The gods said:

20-25. Salutation to Yajñavarāha. Salutation to you of a hundred arms. Salutation to the god of gods. Salutation to you, the omnipresent. Salutation to you of an abiding form, to you of the form of all sacrifices. Salutation to you (of the form of the divisions of time like) kalā, kāṣṭhā and nimeṣa, to you of the form of time. Salutation to you, the soul of beings. Salutation to you having the Ṛgveda as your body. Salutation to you, the soul of the gods. Salutation to you, the Sāmaveda. Salutation to you, Oṁkāra. Salutation to you of the form of the Yajurveda, so also of the form of the ṛc and full of the four Vedas. Salutation to you of the (four) Vedas, the Vedāṅgas and the Upāṅgas. Salutation to you Govinda, having no beginning or end. Salutation to you knowing the Vedas, and having a peculiar form. Salutation to you the lord of Śrī, Bhū, Līlā and the father of the world.

Rudra said:

26-29. Having thus praised god Viṣṇu, the lord of the soul, and of the form of the boar, they worshipped him with sandal, flowers etc. He, being properly worshipped by the gods, gave them a boon desired (by them). Viṣṇu who (i.e. whose praise) was being joyfully sung by the gandharvas and celestial nymphs, and being praised by the great sages, vanished there only. A devoted man who, having got up in the morning, praises (the

*This is rather confusing. As is well known, Viṣṇu assumed the form of a tortoise in the second incarnation to give support to the mountain Mandara which served as a churning rod for gods who wanted to acquire Amṛta from the Milky Ocean. (Ed.)

lord) with these (hymns), gets a desired (piece of) land, full of corn and fruits for a long time. I have told you this splendour of the Boar (incarnation) of Viṣṇu. In the same way I shall describe (his) Nārasiṁha (incarnation). Listen, O you of an excellent face.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED THIRTYEIGHT

The Emergence of Nṛsiṁha

Rudra said:

1-2. Having learnt that his brother was killed, the great demon Hiraṇyakaśipu practised a penance near Meru (dedicating it) to me. O auspicious one, he, the very powerful one, eating (i.e. subsisting on) air, muttering the five-syllabled formula, worshipped me for thousands of divine years.

3. Then with a pleased mind, I said to the great demon: "O demon, ask for the boon that is in your mind." Then the demon spoke to me, who was pleased, O you of an auspicious face:

Hiraṇyakaśipu said:

4-5. Grant me exemption from death from gods, demons, human beings, gandharvas, serpents, fiends, beasts, birds, animals, noble siddhas and yakṣas, vidyādharas, so also kinnaras, so also all diseases, weapons, all principal sages.

Rudra said:

6-14. O you of a pleasing appearance, I said to the demon: "Let it be so." The very powerful demon, having got the great boon from me, conquered Indra and gods and became the lord of the three worlds; and he himself forcibly took all portions of sacrifices. Gods, vanquished by him, did not find a protector. All gandharvas, gods, demons, yakṣas, nāgas, siddhas and sādhyas were under his control. The very mighty king of the demons married, according to proper rites, Uttānapāda's daughter named Kalyāṇī. O you auspicious one, from her was born the

very lustrous Prahlāda, the king of the demons. Even while (he was) in (his mother's) womb, he was attached to Viṣṇu. He, of a delighted mind, never knew anyone else except the lord of gods in all conditions and deeds (done) with his mind, speech and body. The humble and very intelligent one stayed in his preceptor's house at a (proper) time. Having studied all the Vedas and various sacred texts, the demon's son sometime came along with his preceptor to his father and saluted him with humility. The lord of the demons, having embraced his son of auspicious marks with his arms, and having put him who was much amazed, on his lap, said these (words to him):

Hiraṇyakaśipu said:

15. O Prahlāda, you stayed in your preceptor's house for a long time. O you of a good vow, tell me the knowledge given to you by your preceptor.

Rudra said:

16. Thus asked by his father, Prahlāda, a born devotee of Viṣṇu, affectionately spoke words removing sins to the lord of demons:

Prahlāda said:

17. After having saluted Viṣṇu, the Highest Being, the lord, who is the aim of all Upaniṣads, I shall tell you.

Rudra said:

18-20. The lord of demons, having thus heard Viṣṇu's praise, was amazed. He angrily said to the preceptor: "What have you taught my son? O you wicked one, why did you teach my son such praise of Viṣṇu, a stupid thing not fit to be done by a brāhmaṇa? O mean brāhmaṇa, due to your favour (only) this my son has told me the praise of my enemy, which is not fit to be heard."

21-24. Speaking like this and looking around, the demon-king, in a fit of anger, said to a demon: "Bind this mean brāhmaṇa." Hearing these words of the king, he bound (Śukra,) Bhṛgu's son. Seeing his preceptor being bound, Prahlāda, to whom brāhmaṇas were dear, said to his father: "O father, my

perceptor did not teach me this. I have learnt it through the favour of Viṣṇu, the speaker, the seer. The lord is omnipresent. Viṣṇu alone is the imperishable agent, the controller of all human beings. Therefore, O lord, This brāhmaṇa, my preceptor, who is innocent, should be released."

Rudra said:

25-29. Having heard the words of his son, Hiraṇyakaśipu then let the brāhmaṇa free, and with amazement said to his son: "O son, why do you thus go astray (influenced) by the brāhmaṇa's words? Who is Viṣṇu? What is his form? Where does this Viṣṇu stay? Since I am the lord in the world, the master of the three worlds, honour me only. Abandon this Viṣṇu, our enemy, difficult to be overpowered. Or worship lord Śaṅkara, god Śiva, Rudra, the father of the worlds, the chief of gods, giving all splendour. After putting on the mark of three lines on your forehead with ash worship Mahādeva worshipped by demons, in the manner as told in the Pāśupata sect.

Rudra said:

30-32. Hearing these words of the lord of the demons, the priest of the demons said: "O glorious one, do like this only as your father tells. Abandon (our) enemy, Kaiṭabha's enemy, and worship the three-eyed (god, i.e. Śiva). There is no greater god than Śiva, who gives everything to men. Your father also became the lord (of demons) because of his favour only."

Rudra said:

33. Hearing these words of them, Prahlāda, a born devotee of Viṣṇu, said:

34-42. "O greatest ones, since the world is deluded by the Māyā of the lord, even brāhmaṇas knowing Vedānta and honoured among all the people, being proud, speak like this through fickleness. Nārāyaṇa is the highest Brahman. Nārāyaṇa is the highest truth. Nārāyaṇa is the highest meditator and the highest meditation. He is the refuge of the entire world. Acyuta is the eternal good. Eternal Vāsudeva is the sustainer, the creator of the world. The Highest Being is all this. Everything depends upon

him. His body is all golden. He is eternal. His eyes are like lotuses. He is the lord of Śrī, Bhū and Līlā. He is pleasing, spotless and of an auspicious body. He alone created the two lords, Brahmā and Śiva, the two best gods. Brahmā and Śiva act by honouring (i.e. according to) his order only. The wind blows through his fear. The sun rises through his fear. Through his fear run fire, the moon and death as the fifth. The highest, divine god Nārāyaṇa Viṣṇu was alone there (in the beginning). Brahmā was not there; Indra was not there; Śiva was not there; the sun and the moon were not there. The heaven and the earth were not there; nor were the stars and the gods there. The wise men always see the highest abode of that Viṣṇu.

43-51a. O best brāhmaṇas, having ignored the significance of all Upaniṣads, why do you talk like this through attachment or greed before me? Abandoning that Viṣṇu, the god protecting all, and the god of all, how can I, resorting to heresy, worship Śiva? The noble meditating sages like Sanaka meditated upon Kṛṣṇa, the lord of Lakṣmī, the god of gods, Ananta, the Highest Being, dark like the petals of a blue lotus, having large eyes like lotus-leaves, with his chest marked with Śrīvatsa, adorned with all ornaments, always a youth, the lord of all, eternal joy, and giver of pleasures, whom the hosts of gods like Brahmā, Śiva, Indra and others worship, with half a glance of whose wife, gods like Brahmā, Indra, Rudra, Varuṇa, Yama, Soma and (Kubera) the lord of wealth, are looked at. Merely by recollecting his name, even sinful living beings quickly obtain salvation, very difficult to be secured (even) by Brahmā and others. That lord of Śrī alone is always the protector of even the gods. I shall worship only that Viṣṇu united with Lakṣmī. With great ease only I shall reach that highest place of Viṣṇu."

Rudra said:

51b. Hearing these words of him, Hiraṇyakaśipu, full of anger, burnt like another fire. Looking at the demons around him, he, in a fit of anger, spoke like this:

Hiraṇyakaśipu said:

52-54. By my order kill sinful Prahlāda highly devoted to

worshipping my enemy, with multitudes of fierce weapons. His protector Viṣṇu alone will protect him through love. Today only I would see (if) his being protected by Viṣṇu is effective.

Rudra said:

55-59. Then by the order of the lord of demons, the demons, with weapons raised, stood round the son of the lord of demons to kill him. Prahlāda too, meditating upon Viṣṇu in the lotus of his heart, and muttering the eight-syllabled formula, stood like another mountain. On all sides the heroes struck him with lances, iron clubs and śaktis. O you auspicious one, due to Viṣṇu's inviolable power, Prahlāda's body very much became adamantine due to remembering Viṣṇu. Then the great missiles of the enemies of gods, having reached his body, and being cutt off, fell down on the ground like blue lotuses, O auspicious one. The demons were not able to pierce (i.e. hurt) his body even slightly.

60-67. The soldiers, being amazed and with their faces hung down, stood near the king. Seeing his very powerful son of that kind, the demon-king being very much amazed and full of anger, wrathfully ordered all the very poisonous, fearful snakes like Vāsuki: "Eat him (up)." Then the very powerful, very fierce snakes, with their mouths blazing, ate (i.e. started eating) the very powerful (Prahlāda). They, full of poison, bit the devotee of (Viṣṇu) the Garuḍa-bannered one. The (snakes) that subsisted on air became poisonless and had their teeth cut off. With their limbs cut off by a thousand sons of Vinatā, and very much afflicted and vomiting profuse blood, they ran into all directions. Seeing the great snakes (reduced to a condition) like that, the angry lord of the demons then ordered the very much intoxicated quarter-elephants. The quarter-elephants, haughty with rut, ordered by that king, surrounded him, and struck him hard with their very large tusks. Then the tusks of the quarter-elephants, with their roots cut off, fell on the ground.

68-73. The elephants, rendered tuskless, and overcome by fear, fled. Seeing the great elephants (fleeing) the mighty lord of demons got angry. And burning a great fire, he threw it at his son. Fire, seeing Prahlāda, dear to Viṣṇu, did not burn the wise one. Fire became very cool. Seeing the boy not being burnt, the king, who was very much amazed, gave him, good to all beings,

terrible poison. Due to the power of that Viṣṇu, the poison become nectar. Poison, due to one's offering (oneself) to that god, becomes nectar. Having thus deluded his son by means of such fierce and very terrible means, and seeing that he could not be killed, the king of demons, being full of amazement spoke mildly to his son:

Hiraṇyakaśipu said:

74-78. You have properly described before me Viṣṇu's greatness. He is called Viṣṇu because (he stands) pervading all worlds. He who is the omnipresent god is alone the highest god. Actually show me his omnipresence. Having carefully and properly seen the splendour of qualities like supremacy, power, lustre, knowledge, heroism, strength, excellent form of him the highest one, I shall honour Viṣṇu from among the gods. There is no match for my power among the gods. O you who honour (others), as a result of grant of a boon from Śiva I have obtained immunity from death among all living beings and invincibility for living beings. Viṣṇu would receive the title of lord after having vanquished me with power and might.

Rudra said:

79. Hearing these words of him, Prahlāda, being amazed, spoke. He, of a good vow, told about the glory of Viṣṇu to the demon.

Prahlāda said:

80-84. Since that Nārāyaṇa, the glorious one, the highest soul, the ancient one lives in all beings, he is called Vāsudeva. He, the sustainer of the world, is called Viṣṇu. Nothing other than him is the immobile and the mobile. The sentient objects everywhere are Viṣṇu only and none else. The heaven he has pervaded himself with three steps and the pervasion with one step is wonderful(?). That Viṣṇu, having a disc and a mace in his hands, and wearing a yellow garment, is seen by meditating sages through devotion and never without it. Viṣṇu cannot be seen through anger or jealousy. Having pervaded (everything) among gods, lower animals, immobile objects, living beings and among all small and great (objects), he dwells.

Rudra said:

85-87. Hearing these words of Prahlāda, that excellent demon, with his eyes red due to anger, reproaching his son repeatedly, said to him:

Hiraṇyakaśipu said:

If that Viṣṇu is omnipresent and the Highest Being, then actually show him to me. What is the use of much nonsensical talk?

Mahādeva said:

Speaking like this, Hiraṇyakaśipu struck a pillar of the palace with his hand, and said these (words) to Prahlāda:

Hiraṇyakaśipu said:

88. If Viṣṇu would be (i.e. is) omnipresent, then show him (to me) in this (pillar). Otherwise I shall kill you, uttering false words.

Rudra said:

89-93. Speaking like this, the lord of the demons, suddenly drew out his sword, and angrily threw it at Prahlāda's chest to kill him. At that moment, a great sound was heard from the pillar. The interior of the sky was as it were broken with sounds of the destructive fire. Due to that big sound, striking the ears of the demons, all fell on the ground like trees with their roots cut off. The frightened demons thought that the three worlds were inundated. Then great Viṣṇu, of a great lustre, came out of the pillar. He made a very fearful sound, resembling (the one) at the time of the destruction of the world. Due to that great sound stars fell on the ground.

94-97. Having assumed the body of Nṛsiṁha, Viṣṇu manifested (himself) there only. He was covered with the lustre of crores of suns and fires. In his face he resembled a lion, and in (the other parts of) the body he had a human figure. His mouth was fierce due to fangs, and was raised up to the sky with his throbbing tongue. The ends of his hair were surrounded by flames. The lord had eyes like burning firebrands. Covered by a thousand long arms, full of all weapons, he appeared like (moun-

tain) Meru, with many trees having branches. He had worn a garland of divine flowers, and was decorated with divine ornaments.

98-107. To destroy all demons he remained in the form of a man-lion. Seeing very powerful, terrible-looking man-lion, the lord of demons, with his eyelashes burnt and body afflicted, fell (down). Then Prahlāda, seeing Viṣṇu like a man-lion, saluted Viṣṇu with the words 'Victory (to you).' On the limbs of that high-souled man-lion he saw worlds, seas, islands, gods, gandharvas, human beings; a thousand cosmic eggs were seen on the tip of his mane. Similarly in his eyes were seen the moon, the sun etc. In his eyes (were seen) gods Aśvinas, directions and intermediate directions. On his forehead (were seen) Brahmā and Rudra; in his nose (were seen) the sky and air. In his mouth Indra and Agni (were seen). On his tongue Sarasvatī (was seen). On his fangs (were seen) lions, tigers, śarabhas (i.e. the fabulous eight-legged animals), and great serpents. On his throat was seen Meru, and great mountains (were seen) on his shoulders. On the arms of the noble one (were seen) gods, lower animals and human beings. The atmosphere (was seen) in his navel, and the earth (was seen) on his feet. On his hair all herbs (were seen). On the rows of his nails trees (were seen). In his breaths, Vedas with Aṅgas and Upāṅgas (were seen). On all his limbs (were seen) Ādityas, Vasus, Rudras, hosts of Maruts, gandharvas and celestial nymphs.

108-114. Thus were seen the splendours of the highest soul. The son of the lord of demons, seeing Viṣṇu having Śrīvatsa and Kaustubha (worn) on his chest, adorned with a garland of wood-flowers, endowed with weapons like a conch, a disc, a mace, a sword, the Śārṅga (bow), the goal of all Upaniṣads, had his body sprinkled with tears of joy and repeatedly saluted him. The lord of demons, who was under the influence of (i.e. in the clutches of) death, seeing Viṣṇu, and raising his sword, ran to Nṛsiṁha to fight with him. Then all the very powerful demons who had regained consciousness, took their own weapons, and hurriedly struck Viṣṇu. The weapons were reduced to ash on (reaching) the body of Viṣṇu, as straws thrown into fire (are burnt) in various ways. At that time Viṣṇu, seeing the armies of the demons, burnt them with his bright mane which was arranged with lines of

flames. The demons were very much burnt by the fire coming out of Nṛsiṁha's mane.

115-123. All the attendants (were thus burnt). The army had none left in it. Seeing that army, except Prahlāda with his followers, reduced to ash, the lord of demons angrily drew out his sword and moved (towards Viṣṇu). The lord of gods seized the lord of demons with a sword in his hand with one arm, and dropped him down, as a stormy wind (knocks down) a branch. Nṛsiṁha, taking the huge-bodied (demon), fallen on the ground, placed him on his lap. He saw Viṣṇu's face. At that time the sin due to censuring Viṣṇu, and due to the blemish of not being a devotee of Viṣṇu, was reduced to ash merely by Viṣṇu's touch. Then Nṛsiṁha tore off the huge body of the lord of demons with his sharp, hard nails resembling the thunderbolt. The lord of demons, with his soul purified, and with his heart torn off with the nails, actually saw the face of Viṣṇu, and being (thus) fortunate, gave up his life. Great Viṣṇu, having cut off his body into a hundred pieces, and drawn out his long entrails, put the dear ones round his neck (put them affectionately round his neck). Then all hosts of gods, sages having penance as their treasure, led by Brahmā and Rudra, slowly came there to praise (him). They were afraid to propitiate the blazing (Viṣṇu) having faces on all sides.

124-126. (Then) they brought before their mind the goddess, the mother, the supporter of the worlds, of a golden complexion, extremely beautiful (hariṇī)[1], and destroying all troubles. Having prought before their mind the auspicious Lakṣmī (wife) of Viṣṇu, always of a blameless body, with the hymns of the goddess (i.e. Lakṣmī), and devoutly saluted her, the eternal one, brought before their mind by them, that goddess, having four arms, large eyes, and adorned with all ornaments, appeared (there).

127-128. Seeing the beloved of the god of gods, who had put on silken garments, and a divine garland, all gods, with the palms of their hands joined, said to her: "Propitiate your husband. Act in such a way that the lord would give the three worlds immunity from fear."

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1. Hariṇī—One of the four classes of women, also called 'Citriṇī', who is said to be a woman endowed with various talents and excellences. The four divisions into which writers on erotical science class women are: Padminī, Citriṇī, Śaṅkhinī, and Hastinī or Kariṇī.

Rudra said:

129-133. The goddess, thus addressed, suddenly went to her husband Viṣṇu and having bowed down before him and saluted him, said to him: "(Please) be pleased." Seeing his own dear wife, Viṣṇu, the lord of all, gave up his anger due to the demon's body, and in a moment became pleased. That ocean of pity, Viṣṇu, placing the goddess on his lap and embracing her, looked at the gods with eyes wet with the nectar of favour. Then there was a joyful agitation among them, praising him and saluting him, and seen by him with kind eyes. Then all the hosts of gods, with their minds full of joy, having saluted the god, the lord of the worlds, with the palms of their hands joined, said (to him):

The hosts of gods said:

134-135. O lord of the worlds, we are not able to see your very wonderful lustre, and your very wonderful form, marked with many arms and feet. We, all gods, are not able to see and put up with your very strong lustre that has filled the three worlds.

Mahādeva said:

136-146. Thus requested by the gods, the lord of gods withdrew that very fearful lustre, and became of a pleasing appearance, auspicious, resembling a crore of autumnal moons, having eyes like lotuses, resembling crores of flashes of lightning due to the mass of his mane full of nectar. The great lord was graced with four delicate, divine arms, endowed with divine armlets and bracelets full of various jewels, resembling the branches with fruits of the desire-yielding tree. The lord was decorated with lotus-like hands resembling japā-flowers. The man-lion was adorned with two raised hands holding a conch and a disc, and with other two granting boons and freedom from fear. His chest was (marked) with Śrīvatsa and Kaustubha; he was adorned with a garland of wood-flowers. He was also decorated with ear-rings resembling the rays of the rising sun. The man-lion, adorned with ornaments like necklaces, armlets, bracelets, shone with Lakṣmī sitting on the left (lap) of his body. The deities along with the great sages, seeing Lakṣmī and the man-lion, with their hearts full of joy, sprinkled them with tears of joy. They, plunged into the

ocean of joy, constantly saluted them. By offering divine flowers, they worshipped the lord of souls. Having sprinkled the ancient Nṛsiṁha with the nectar from jewelled pitchers full of nectar, having worshipped him with divine offerings of lights, they praised him with divine hymns, and repeatedly saluted him.

147-155. Then the lord of Lakṣmī, who was pleased, gave them boons desired by them. Then Viṣṇu, to whom his devotees are dear, along with all hosts of gods made the imperishable Prahlāda the king of all demons. Having cheered up Prahlāda, and having, with the best gods, consecrated him, he gave him the boons desired by him and faithful devotion. Then Nṛsiṁha, being praised by all hosts of gods, and his body scattered over with beautiful flowers, vanished there only. Then all the hosts of gods went to their respective abodes. And again, they, with their minds pleased, enjoyed the portions of sacrifices. Then the gods, along with gandharvas, became free from fear. When the great demon was killed, all were delighted only. Prahlāda, Viṣṇu's devotee, then righteously ruled over the kingdom. The best devotee of viṣṇu obtained the kingdom through Viṣṇu's grace. He having worshipped Nṛsiṁha with many sacrifices and gifts etc. obtained, at (the proper) time, Viṣṇu's eternal place, obtained by meditating sages. Those who everyday listen to Prahlāda's account, are all free from sins, and will obtain the highest state. O goddess, I have told you this grandeur of Viṣṇu as Nṛsiṁha. O goddess, listen to the remaining state of grandeur in due order.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED THIRTYNINE

The Rise of Bali and Kaśyapa's Penance

Rudra said:

1-4. A son was born to Prahlāda, who was known as Virocana. His son, the large-armed one, was lord Bali, (like) fire. He was the best among those who knew the ways of the world; he was veracious; his senses were subdued; he was the dearest

devotee of Viṣṇu; he was always engaged in pious practices, and was pure. The very mighty one, having defeated all gods with Indra and hosts of Maruts, brought the three worlds under his control, and ruled. Without being tilled, the earth grew (corn). It gave much corn and many fruits. All cows were full-milking. Trees had fruits and flowers.

5-9. All men, free from sins, were engaged in their own duties. Free from torment they constantly worshipped Viṣṇu. In this way, Bali, the lord of the demons, ruled righteously. His servants, the gods like Indra, stood by him. Removing the pride of the might (of others) he enjoyed supremacy in the three worlds. Kaśyapa, seeing his son, deprived of his kingdom, and desiring his good, practised penance, along with his wife, in honour of Viṣṇu. Along with (his wife) Aditi, the pious one, took to the vow of (drinking) water (only). He worshipped Padmanābha, Viṣṇu, the lord of gods. Then for thousands of years he worshipped Viṣṇu.

10-13. The ancient one, with the goddess (Lakṣmī) appeared there only. He saw the lotus-eyed (Viṣṇu), holding a conch, a disc, a mace, dark like the jewel sapphire, adorned with all ornaments, graced with a bright crown, armlets, necklaces, and ear-rings, with his chest brightened with Kaustubha, covered with a yellow garment, and seated on a great round seat with Lakṣmī. Seeing the lord of the worlds, the best brāhmaṇa, with his heart full of joy, and with his wife, saluted and praised him.

Kaśyapa said:

14-23. Repeated salutations to you, O lord of Lakṣmī, O omniscient one, O lord of the world, O soul of all, O lord of all gods, O creator and destroyer of the world; O you having no beginning, death or end, salutation to you having a body supporting the universe, having the body of the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas, and seeing everything; salutation to you, the soul of all; salutation to you, very subtle one, full of auspicious qualities; to you whose soul is fit to be meditated upon by the meditating sages; salutation to you the youthful boy, the lord of Śrī, Bhū, and Līlā; to you who are eternally free and the only pleasure; to you who dwell in the highest abode; salutation to you, O you of four characters; salutation to you, O you of four

forms; salutation to you having five conditions, and of the nature of five. You are always worshipped by the meditating sages, devoted to the five-natured one. You remain in the five sacraments of those who know the five principles. O Viṣṇu, your form superior to the five (forms) should always be known. O you of a complete form, the wise certainly know you in four ways. Your servants purify the entire world, your creation. In a moment you cause the freedom from the bond of the mundane existence of those brāhmaṇas, full of (the knowledge of) the three Vedas, devoted to their duties, and loving (your) devotees. Salutation to the supporter of the three worlds, the self-supporting one, and the soul of all. Salutation to you the supporter, the creator, the universe, of the form of the universe; to Nārāyaṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Vāsudeva, Śārṅgin; to Viṣṇu, Jiṣṇu, of pure energy.

Mahādeva said:

24. The lord Janārdana who was thus properly being praised with such eulogies by the great sage, was pleased, and spoke with a grave voice:

The lord said:

25. O greatest brāhmaṇa, I, devoutly and properly worshipped by you, am pleased with you. Ask for a boon. Well-being to you. I shall do as desired by you.

Mahādeva said:

26. Then Kaśyapa, with his wife, thus spoke to Viṣṇu:

Kaśyapa said:

27-28. O lord of gods, being (born) as my son, do what is good to the gods. O god, Bali has forcibly conquered the three worlds. Being born as Indra's younger brother known as Upendra, and having, through your Māyā, vanquished Bali by whatever manner, give eternally the three worlds to Indra.

Mahādeva said:

29-31. Thus addressed by the brāhmaṇa (i.e. Kaśyapa), Viṣṇu said: "All right." Being praised by the gods, he vanished there only. In the meanwhile, the lord, the creator of beings,

came to the womb of Aditi, (the wife) of the noble Kaśyapa. At that time Bali, with (the help of) eight great sages commenced a long sacrificial session according to the rules.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED FORTY

Viṣṇu Incarnates as Vāmana

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-5a. Then at the end of a thousand years Aditi gave birth to Vāmana, Viṣṇu, Acyuta, Hari, the lord, who was the great lord of all the worlds, who had Śrīvatsa and Kaustubha on his chest, whose lustre was like that of the full moon, who was handsome, whose eyes were like lotuses, whose body was very short, who was dressed like a lad, who could be known by means of the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas, who was marked with such signs as a girdle, a (piece of) deer-hide, and a staff. Seeing him of a great vigour, all deities led by Indra, along with great sages, praised and saluted him. Then the lord who was pleased, said to the best gods:

Vāmana said:

5b. O best gods, tell me what I should do today.

Śrī Śaṅkara said:

6a. Then the gods who were delighted, spoke to that highest lord:

The gods said:

6b-7. O Madhusūdana, Bali's sacrifice is going on now. O lord, this is the time for the lord of demons not to turn down (any request). Having asked for the three worlds from him, (please) give them to us.

Śaṅkara said:

8-10. Thus addressed by all gods, Viṣṇu went to Bali, seated

at the place of the sacrifice along with eight sages. Seeing him having come as a guest, the king of demons suddenly got up. Seeing (as if) Viṣṇu himself had come as a guest, he, with a smile, seated him on a seat of flowers and properly honoured him. Having bowed before him and saluted him, he said in a faltering voice:

Bali said:

11-12. I am fortunate, I am blessed. My life is fruitful. O best brāhmaṇa, having honoured you, what dear to you, should I do? O best brāhmaṇa, I shall give you that for which you have come to me. O best among those who know the Vedas, speak quickly.

Śaṅkara said:

13a. Then with a delighted mind (Viṣṇu) spoke to the king:

Vāmana said:

13b-18. O best king, listen. I shall tell you the reason for my arrival. O lord of demons, O you who remove the pride (of others, or you who respect others), give me (that much piece of) land measured by my three steps, for an enclosed place for keeping the fire-vessel. I do not desire anything else. Of all gifts, the gift of (a piece of) land is the best. That king who gives even that much piece of land measured by his thumb, to a poor brāhmaṇa, would be the lord of the world. In this world there is no other gift like that (of a piece) of land. Both of them—he who receives (a piece of) land and he who gives (a piece of) land—are meritorious and, after death, go to heaven. Therefore, O great king, give me that much piece of land measured by my three steps. O king, do not hesitate to give such a small (piece of) land. O king, that will indeed be (tantamount to) the gift of the three worlds.

Śaṅkara said:

19-20. Then the king, with his face delighted, said, "All right." He intended to make him the gift of land in the proper way. Seeing the king of demons, his priest, Uśanas, said to him (these) words, "O king, do not give him the land."

Śukra said:

21-22. O king, this is Viṣṇu, the highest lord, who was requested by the gods. He has come here to take the entire earth after deceiving you. Therefore, land should not be given to the noble one. O king, by my word, give him some other object.

Śrī Śaṅkara said:

23a. Then having laughed the king firmly said to his preceptor:

Bali said:

23b-25a. To please Viṣṇu, I have done all meritorious acts. Today I am fortunate that Viṣṇu himself has come (to me). Today I shall very happily give (even) my life to him. Therefore, I shall give him even the three worlds.

Śrī Śaṅkara said:

25b-27a. Speaking like this, the king devoutly washed his feet and first (offering him) water, gave him the land in the proper manner. Taking him round, and having saluted him he gave him wealth as a present. With his heart delighted, he again said to the brāhmaṇa:

Bali said:

27b-28a. O brāhmaṇa, I am fortunate, I am blessed having given you land. O best brāhmaṇa, take this land as desired by you.

Śrī Śaṅkara said:

28b-35. To the king Viṣṇu said: "Near you, in your presence, I shall get the land measured with my steps." Saying so, the highest lord abandoned his dwarfish form, and taking up the body of Viṣṇu, extending up to fifty crores (of yojanas) he seized the earth along with the seas and mountains, along with the oceans, islands, gods, demons and human beings. With one step of his body he crossed the entire earth. Then he said: "O best among the demon-kings, what do I do now?" It was the very powerful Trivikrama-form of the lord. It was good for the well-being of even the gods and the noble sages. It would not be possi-

ble even for Brahmā or Śiva to see it. O auspicious Girijā, having occupied the entire earth, that step became a hundred yojanas long. The ancient one gave the demon-king a divine sight. He showed him his Janārdana-form.

36-37. Seeing that universal form of the god, Bali, the lord of demons, got matchless joy, and was covered with tears of joy. Seeing the god, having saluted him, having praised him with eulogies, he, with his heart delighted, spoke in a faltering voice:

Bali said:

38. Seeing you, the highest god, I am fortunate, I am blessed. O highest lord, accept these three worlds.

Śrī Śaṅkara said:

39-48. Then Viṣṇu, Acyuta, the lord of all, spread up his other immutable foot along with stars and planets, and covering all gods, up to Brahmā's world. He was full of the foot of Acyuta, O you of an auspicious face. Then Brahmā, the grandsire, (seeing) that foot of the god of gods, which was marked with (the signs of) a disc, a lotus etc. saying, with his heart full of joy, "I am blessed," took his pot (of water), and with devotion washed the foot with the water from it. Due to Viṣṇu's majesty that water became inexhaustible. That pure holy water fell on the peak of Meru. For purifying the world it flowed in four streams: Sītā, Alakanandā, Cakṣu and Bhadrā in due order. Alakanandā is said to be (flowing) to the south of Meru in three streams; she, purifying the world, and having three streams is called Tripathagā. The auspicious river is called Mandākinī in heaven, Bhogavatī in nether world, and the speedy Gaṅgā in between (i.e. on the earth flowing) for purifying human beings. O you of an auspicious face, seeing her flowing over the Meru mountain, I held her on my head to purify myself. Having held (on my head) the auspicious water of Gaṅgā for a thousand divine years, I obtained bliss, and am adored in all worlds.

49-53. There is no doubt that he who would carry on his head the water of Gaṅgā rising from Viṣṇu's foot, or would drink it, would be respected by the world. He who would utter (the words) 'Gaṅgā, Gaṅgā' even from (a distance of) hundred yojanas, is freed from all sins, and goes to Viṣṇu's heaven. Then

king Bhagīratha and Gautama having a great penance (to his credit) worshipped me with penance and asked for Gaṅgā. O goddess, then I affectionately gave that auspicious best river Gaṅgā, (rising from the foot) of Viṣṇu to them for the good of the entire world. Since she was brought by Gautama, she was called Gautamī. Since she was chosen by king (Bhagīratha), she was known as Bhāgīrathī.

54-60. I have in course (of the narration) told you the excellent greatness of Gaṅgā. Then that glorious lord Nārāyaṇa loving his devotees, gave the auspicious nether world to Bali, the lord of demons. He made Bali the king of all the demons, serpents and the aquatic animals till the (final) inundation (of the earth). In the guise of a lad the immutable Viṣṇu, the killer of demons, the son of Kaśyapa, affectionately gave the worlds to Indra. Then gods with gandharvas and the very powerful sages praised Viṣṇu with divine eulogies and worshipped him. For them to see his form, he contracted it; and being honoured by them Viṣṇu vanished. Viṣṇu, the mighty one, thus protected Indra well. The lord of the three worlds (i.e. Indra) obtained the three worlds and great affluence. I have thus told you the account of the auspicious splendour of Viṣṇu's incarnation as Vāmana. The rest of the splendour I shall narrate in due order.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED FORTYONE

Paraśurāma's Story

The lord said:

1-3a. Bhṛgu's son was the great, best brāhmaṇa (named) Jamadagni. He had mastered all Vedas and Vedāṅgas and had practised a severe penance. O you beautiful lady, on the auspicious sandy bank of Gaṅgā the religious-minded one practised penance (in honour) of Indra for a thousand years. Then lord Indra, being pleased, said these (words):

Indra said:

3b. O best brāhmaṇa, ask for a boon that is (i.e. that you have) in your mind.

The lord said:

4a. Then the brāhmaṇa sage spoke to Indra who was pleased:

Jamadagni said:

4b. O god, give me (the desire-yielding cow) Surabhi always fulfilling one's desires.

The lord said:

5-8. Then Indra, the lord of gods, being pleased, gave him the divine Surabhi fulfilling all desires. That Jamadagni of a great penance (to his credit), having obtained Surabhi lived with great grandeur like another Indra. Jamadagni, of a great penance (to his credit) married in the proper manner, Reṇukā, Reṇuka's daughter. The pious-minded one for many years enjoyed with her as Indra with Paulomī, his auspicious queen.

9-17a. Then the very pious one, with a desire for having a son, performed a sacrifice. With (that) sacrifice he pleased god Indra. (Indra) Śacī's husband, being pleased, (promised) him a very strong, very powerful, mighty-armed son, tormentor of all enemies. Then in course of time the best brāhmaṇa generated a very strong and powerful son with a part of a portion of Viṣṇu and having all (good) marks, on Reṇukā, O you of a bright smile. When the very powerful son (was born), his grandfather joyfully gave him a name indicating Viṣṇu's portion. He gave him a very auspicious name (Paraśu-)Rāma. Being born from Jamadagni he was called Jāmadagnya. The best brāhmaṇa of the family of Bhṛgu grew. His thread ceremony was performed; he was proficient in all sciences and arts. To practise penance he went to the Śālagrāma mountain. There he saw the brāhmaṇa-sage Kaśyapa of unlimited splendour. The brāhmaṇa, Marīci's son, was full of delight with (i.e. on seeing) him. In the proper manner he gave him the indestructible formula of Viṣṇu.

17b-23. Having received the formula from Kaśyapa, the high-souled one, (Paraśu-)Rāma, muttering day and night the

great six-syllabled formula, worshipped the lord of Lakṣmī. That pious Bhārgava (i.e. Paraśurāma) meditating upon Viṣṇu having eyes like lotus-petals and the omniscient one, practised penance for many years. He, with senses subdued and speech controlled, and (practising) great penance, remained (there). The brāhmaṇa-sage Jamadagni remained on the auspicious bank of Gaṅgā. He performed pious acts according to the precepts like sacrifices and gifts. By the favour of Indra's cow his wealth was full. Sometime the king, the lord of Haihaya, surrounded by his entire army, having conquered all countries, reached the hermitage of Jamadagni, the son of Bhṛgu. Seeing the glorious, best sage, he saluted him.

24-29. The king, having asked the devout great sage about his well-being, gave him garments and ornaments. He too honoured the king that had come to his house. Having honoured according to the precept the king with *madhuparka** the sage fed the best king along with his army. The very intelligent son of Bhṛgu (i.e. Jamadagni) solicited Surabhi. She, the cow of plenty, produced food, drink etc. at that time. The best sage, of a great penance, gave the inexhaustible food, drink etc. produced by her to the king along with his army. Seeing that cow of plenty, the king was full of curiosity. The very wicked-minded (king) longed for the cow. The best king then begged Jamadagni for Surabhi.

Kārtavīrya said:

30. O brāhmaṇa, give me this tawny cow of plenty, giving all desired objects. O you of a good vow, I shall give you thousands of other cows.

The lord said:

31-32. Thus addressed by the king, Jamadagni of a great penance (to his credit) said (to him): "O king, this cow of plenty cannot be given to you by me. This one was protected by Indra, the god of gods. O king, how should the wealth of deities be given by me?"

33-36. The king, thus addressed, was then excited with

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*A preparation of curd, clarified butter, water, honey and sugar offered to guests.

anger. He, surrounded by the entire army, seized the cow of plenty forcibly. Then, O you of an excellent complexion, the glorious cow of plenty became angry, and with her horns and soles of her hoofs struck his huge army. Then that goddess, the cow of plenty, having, in a short time, struck that army, vanished, and in a moment went near Indra. Then (Kārtavīrya) Arjuna, seeing his army struck, was overcome by anger. With his fist he struck Bhārgava, the best brāhmaṇa.

37-39. Being struck by him in many ways, he was weakened. The best brāhmaṇa suddenly fell on the ground and died. The lord of Haihaya, the wicked-minded one, having killed there the best sage, and surrounded by a great army entered his own city. Rāma Bhārgava worshipped the god of gods. Pleased by his worship Viṣṇu said:

God Viṣṇu said:

40-41. O child, with the penance of you of a controlled mind, I am pleased. O brāhmaṇa, I shall give you a very auspicious power. Possessed of my power, kill the wicked great kings for destroying those who cause a burden to the earth and for the good of the deities.

Mahādeva said:

42-44. Speaking like this, the god gave him an axe capable of killing the enemies, so also the great bow of Viṣṇu and many divine missiles. Lord Viṣṇu, having given (these) to Jamadagni, said: "O best brāhmaṇa, you, the killer of the enemy's soldiers, having killed many arrogant kings repeatedly, take this entire earth bound by the ocean. Full of piety and great heroism you protect it. In course of time, you will reach my position by my grace."

The lord said:

45-50a. Having said like this, and having given the brāhmaṇa a boon, the god vanished. Rāma also suddenly went to his father's hermitage. Seeing his father killed, Bhārgava (i.e. Paraśurāma) was filled with anger. He desired to make the earth, crowded with kings, clear of kṣatriyas. He went to the city of the king of Haihaya, which was full of kings. With his

body burning with anger, he, with his weapons raised, stood at the gate. The citizens of his city seeing that very powerful Jāmadagnya, with a blazing body, looked upon him as the destructive fire at the end of the world. Being afflicted by fear, all ran to the king, the lord of Haihaya. They praised him of great energy and equipped with all weapons. Hearing their words, the king with an amazed mind, said:

King of Haihaya said:

50b-51. Who is that forcibly standing at the gate of my city with weapons? Even Indra, or Yama, or Rudra, or Kubera, can never stand with weapons at the gate of my city.

Mahādeva said:

52-55. Saying so, the lord of kings impelled his very strong servants to see him, and the wicked one said to them: "Arrest him." Having gone, they saw at the gate a very strong hero burning like the destructive fire at the end of the world, and difficult to be seen due to his lustre. The mighty ones were not even able to look at him. From all sides they, desirous of seizing him, often went to him. Seeing all those servants of the lord of kings with weapons, the very powerful best brāhmaṇa, Jāmadagnya, said laughing:

Paraśurāma said:

56-57. O mean men, I, Rāma, the son of Bhārgava, have come (here). I shall kill all best kings for (i.e. as a revenge of) my father's murder. To my (dead) father I shall offer Kārtavīrya's blood mixed with sesamum-seeds, and shall offer the piṇḍa with his lotus-head.

Mahādeva said:

58-62. Thus addressed, the very powerful servants of the king struck him with arrows as fire with straws. Then the very brave Rāma of genuine valour was angry, and drawing the bow of Viṣṇu made the sound of the bow-string. With that great sound the three worlds were filled. Even gods were frightened. (Such) was the great wonder. Then the very strong Paraśurāma struck the very brave, very powerful servants with arrows resem-

bling fire. Having killed the servants of the glorious king, he stood like the destructive fire at the end of the world, deadly to all beings.

63-68. Hearing that his servants were killed in the battle by the intelligent (Paraśu-) Rāma, the brave king of Haihaya, with his eyes red with anger, went out with his army to the place where Bhārgava stood. Seeing him appearing deadly and blazing with his own lustre, all the men there, suspecting the destruction of human beings were frightened. Then a very fierce battle took place between Rāma and the kings, with fearful strokes of weapons and missiles, as between two showering clouds. Then Rāma of a great lustre easily burnt the king's army in a moment with the missile of Viṣṇu. Then Rāma of unlimited valour cut off the thousand arms of the wicked Kārtavīrya with his sharp axe. The very brave king could not fight with (Paraśu-) Rāma in the battle.

69-74. The wicked-minded one lost his valour due to his own sin. The mighty son of Reṇukā, being angry, cut off his head, as mighty Indra did the peak of a big mountain, and he who was brave and angry, killed Sahasrabāhu and all the kings with his axe in the battle. Seeing Rāma, the very fearful one, all kings on the earth, struck by fear, ran away as elephants do on seeing a lion. The angry Rāma killed the kings even though they had fled due to the resentment against his father's murder, as the angry Garuḍa killed the serpents. The valorous Rāma made the entire (world) clear of the kṣatriyas, but protected (i.e. spared) only the very great family of Ikṣvāku, due to its being the family to which his maternal grandfather was related, and due to his mother's words.

75-78. Rāma, the destroyer of the families of kings, deprived the kings of the family of his maternal grandfather of their kingdoms, but did not kill them belonging to Manu's dynasty. But the brave one destroyed the families of all (other) kings. The brāhmaṇa, the mighty son of Jamadagni, having made the earth clear of the kṣatriyas, duly performed the great horse-sacrifice. He gave the earth with the seven islands to chief brāhmaṇas. That brave son of Jamadagni, having given the earth to the brāhmaṇas, went to the hermitage of Nara-Nārāyaṇa to practise penance.

79-81. O goddess, I have told you this account of the incar-

nation of lord (Viṣṇu), holder of the Śārṅga bow, who had entered Rāma with his power. Due to the entrance of the power this (form) of the noble one cannot be worshipped. The chief, noble, brāhmaṇas, the devotees of the lord, should worship the incarnations of (Dāśarathi) Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, perfect with virtues, worshipped by sages, and giving salvation to human beings.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED FORTYTWO

The Story of Rāma

Rudra said:

1-3a. Formerly Svāyambhuva Manu muttered the great formula of twelve syllables at Naimiṣa on the pure, auspicious bank of Gomatī. For a thousand years he worshipped Lakṣmī's lord. Lord Viṣṇu said to him: "Choose a boon from me." Then Manu Svāyambhuva joyfully said to Viṣṇu:

Manu said:

3b-4a. O Viṣṇu, be born as my son in three existences, O lord of gods. I am worshipping you with a desire for a son.

Rudra said:

4b. Thus addressed, Lakṣmī's lord spoke with very good words:

Viṣṇu said:

5-7. O greatest king, whatever is desired (by you) in your mind will take place. I too have a great pleasure in being your son. O best king, when you will be born in the period having stability as its aim, I shall also be born as your son, O you of a good vow. O sinless one, in every age I shall be born of you for protecting the good, destroying the wicked and establishing righteousness.

Rudra said:

8-14. Having thus given him a boon, Viṣṇu vanished there only. From Manu Svāyambhuva he had the first birth. He was born as king Daśaratha in the Raghu-family formerly. The second birth was that of lord Vasudeva in the family of the Vṛṣṇis. He will be born as a brāhmaṇa in the town of Śambhala in the last two quarters of the Kali-age of the measure of a thousand divine years. Kausalyā was born as the wife of king Daśaratha. Devakī was known (to be born) to serve the Yadu-family. Devaprabhā was born as the wife of a brāhmaṇa Harivrata. Thus they obtained the motherhood of Viṣṇu in three existences. O you of a good vow, I shall first tell you the account of Rāma, by just remembering whom even sinners get liberation. Hiraṇyaka and Hiraṇyākṣa, taking up second birth, will be born as the very strong Kumbhakarṇa and Rāvaṇa.

15-22. O you innocent one, pious Viśravas, a brāhmaṇa, was the son of Pulastya. His wife, a demon's daughter, was Viśālākṣī. She was the daughter of Sukeśī. And the demon Sumālin's daughter Kekasī (Kaikasī?) was his (another) wife of a firm vow. Being excessively full of lust, the slim, respectful lady of a charming appearance had sexual intercourse with the great sage in the evening. Due to her desire for sexual enjoyment in the evening two very powerful demons, Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarṇa, known in the world, were born to her. A daughter, Śūrpaṇakhā of a deformed face was also born to her. After sometime Bibhīṣaṇa was born to her. He was of a good character, devoted to God, veracious, pious and pure. Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarṇa were greatest like the Himālaya mountain. The two very much propitiated me with very severe penance. O goddess, that wicked Rāvaṇa worshipped me with just a wicked deed with his lotus-like heads. Then, I with my mind very much pleased said to him:

23-30. "Ask for a boon that is in your mind, O child." Then the wicked one said: "With a desire (i.e. as I have a desire) to conquer all worlds, let me not be killed by gods, demons or fiends." Then, O you of a beautiful face, I gave the wicked demon immunity from death from gods, demons or fiends. The very powerful demon, proud due to the grant of the boon, troubled the three worlds, gods, demons and fiends. Gods, troubled by him, full of fear, led by Brahmā, sought the shelter of god

(Viṣṇu), the lord of Lakṣmī. Understanding their anguish, the ancient one said, in order to grant them immunity from fear, to all gods led by Brahmā and Rudra:

The lord said:

I shall be born in the family of Raghu as the son of king Daśaratha. I shall kill the wicked Rāvaṇa with his relatives. Taking to a human body I shall kill the thorn (i.e. nuisance) to the deities. You too, born as monkeys due to Nandin's curse, help me, O best gandharvas and celestial nymphs.

Rudra said:

31-32. All deities, thus addressed by Viṣṇu, god of gods, were born on the earth after being turned into (i.e. as) monkeys. Bhārgava also gave the earth girt by the ocean. It was formerly given to the very noble Raghus by great sages.

33. There was Vaivasvata Manu's son, known as Ikṣvāku, the best among kings and very powerful, best among those who knew the ways of the world.

34-38. In his family was born the very brilliant and powerful king Daśaratha, king Aja's son, truthful, pure, and of a good character. The king protected the entire earth with valour. He installed all best kings on the kingdoms (i.e. thrones). That king married Kausalyā, king Kosala's daughter, beautiful in all limbs. His second wife was Sumitrā by name, Magadha king's daughter, of a bright smile. His third wife was Kekayī, having eyes like lotus-petals, and the daughter of Kekaya king.

39-44. With these three wives the Kākutstha king (i.e. Daśaratha) enjoyed while protecting the earth. There was a city named Ayodhyā situated on the bank of Sarayū. It was full of all jewels and wealth and grains. It possessed ramparts and town-gates. It had golden ramparts. It had excellent elephants and horses as Indra's city (had). In it lived the righteous king along with best sages and the noble brāhmaṇa Vasiṣṭha, his family priest. And he ruled over the kingdom in which the thorns (i.e. sources of nuisance) were destroyed. That city of Ayodhyā also was called holy, since the revered Supreme Being would be born in it. O auspicious one, the name of that city of the abode (of Viṣṇu) was great.

45-51. That is the highest place where revered Viṣṇu dwelt. There salvation, instantly cutting off (the bonds of) all acts, would take place. When Viṣṇu was born there, O you of an auspicious face, all men were delighted. That king (Daśaratha) having protected the entire earth, and longing for a son performed a sacrifice in honour of Viṣṇu (to propitiate) Hari, Acyuta. Worshipped with the sacrifice in his honour by him, Viṣṇu, the omnipresent king, the lord of Lakṣmī, giver of boons said. In the fire Viṣṇu of the form of sacrifice then appeared. He was like pure gold. He held a conch, a disc and a mace. He had put on white garments. He was glorious, and adorned with all ornaments. On his chest were Śrīvatsa and Kaustubha; he was adorned with a garland of wood-flowers. His large eyes resembled lotus-petals, he had four arms, and was of a generous mind. The lord of Lakṣmī, with Lakṣmī seated on his left lap, appeared there. He who loved his devotees, said to the king: "I am the giver of boons (i.e. I shall grant you a boon)."

52-54a. Seeing him, the lord of all worlds, the king full of joy and with his mind full of delight, with his wife (wives?) saluted him. With the palms of his hands folded, and bowing down, he spoke words faltering due to joy. He said to Viṣṇu, the lord of gods: "Be my son." Then Viṣṇu, the lord, being pleased, said to the king:

Viṣṇu said:

54b-55. O best king, for the good of the gods and the earth, I shall be born (as your son), for the protection of the good, for killing the demons, for granting liberation to the worlds, and for establishing righteousness.

Mahādeva said:

56. Viṣṇu gave the king bright rice boiled in milk, kept in a golden pot and held in the hand of Lakṣmī.

Viṣṇu said:

57. O king, O you of a good vow, give this rice boiled in milk to your wives. On them will be born sons from my body.

Mahādeva said:

58-60. Speaking like this, Viṣṇu, being praised by all sages,

presented himself, and vanished in the same way. The very calm king, seeing the eldest and the youngest queen, divided the divine rice boiled in milk, and gave it to them. In the meanwhile his beautiful-eyed middle wife, longing for a son, came near him.

61-62. Seeing her, Kausalyā and Kekayī of a beautiful waist, gave half (the portion of) their divine rice boiled in milk to her. Eating that divine rice boiled in milk all the queens with beautiful waists, conceived and they, of a bright lustre, shone.

63-68. Then Viṣṇu, the lord of gods, wearing yellow garments and holding a conch, a disc, a mace in his hands, appeared in their dreams. In this charming time, O you of a bright smile, in the month of Caitra, in the bright half of the month, on the ninth day, when the Sun was in the Puṣya constellation, in the noon, and at a time when all Planets were auspicious, Kausalyā gave birth to a son, Viṣṇu, the lord of worlds, who was dark like lotus-leaves, who resembled crores of Cupids, whose eyes were large like lotus-petals, and was adorned with all ornaments. On his chest were Śrīvatsa and Kaustubha. He was graced with all ornaments. He shone with two ear-rings (bright) like the rising sun, resembled many suns, was covered with great lustre. He, the charming one, was born from the body of the highest lord, as one lamp is produced (i.e. lighted) from another lamp.

69-70. He was the lord of all worlds, who was fit to be meditated upon by all meditating sages, was ancient, the goal of all Upaniṣads, endless and the highest god. He was Viṣṇu, the cause of the creation, maintenance and destruction of the world, the protector of all beings, the lord full of all beings.

71-75. When the lord of the world was born, in heaven divine drums were sounded; the best gods sent down showers of flowers. Gods led by Brahmā, seated in aeroplanes, and along with sages and with their entire bodies overcome by joy, praised (him). The chiefs of gandharvas sang and bevies of celestial nymphs danced. Holy, auspicious breezes blew. The sun became very bright. The fires burnt (after being) subsided; the ten quarters were clear. Then the king joyfully seeing his son, the ancient (god Viṣṇu), performed through Vasiṣṭha, the ceremony to be performed at the birth of a child. Then revered Vasiṣṭha also gave him a charming name.

76-79. "This great lord is the 'ramaṇa' or lover of Śrī, living

in a lotus. Therefore, his ancient name Śrīrāma is settled." It is equal to the thousand names of Viṣṇu (i.e. the hymn Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma) and gives salvation to human beings. Brought into existence by Viṣṇu, he is called Viṣṇu. The revered sage Vasiṣṭha, having named him, taken him round, having saluted him, having praised him with eulogies and having recited the thousand names (of Viṣṇu) for the good luck of the noble one, the very lustrous one, went from that most auspicious house.

80-82. Then the king gladly gave much wealth to chief brāhmaṇas. He also righteously caused to give the gift of a myriad of cows. The best of the Raghu dynasty gave a hundred thousand villages (to brāhmaṇas). With divine garments, and ornaments, and immeasurable wealth, he gratified the brāhmaṇas to please Viṣṇu.

83-87. Kausalyā with expanded hands saw him resembling a white lotus, having a lotus in his lotus-like hand. She saw, O you of an excellent face, (marks of) lotuses on his beautiful feet. On his body (she saw) (signs of) a conch, a disc, a mace, a lotus, a flag and garments etc.; on his chest (she saw) Śrīvatsa and Kaustubha along with a garland of wood-flowers. On his body she saw the entire world with gods, demons and human beings. The large-eyed (Kausalyā) saw the fourteen worlds on his smiling face. In the breath of the noble one she saw Vedas and Itihāsas (historical accounts). O you of an excellent complexion, on his buttocks (she saw) islands, oceans and mountains. In his navel (she saw) Brahmā and Śiva. In his ears (she saw) the bright quarters. In his eyes she saw fire and the sun and in his nose (she saw) the very speedy wind.

88. Seeing all his splendours, the goal of all the Upaniṣads, the beautiful (lady) was afraid, and having saluted him again and again, and with her eyes full of tears, she, with the palms of her hands folded, said (these) words:

Kausalyā said:

89. O lord of the god of gods, I am fortunate in having got you as my son, O master. O lord of the world, be pleased with me. Show towards me a son's affection.

The lord said:

90. Viṣṇu (i.e. Rāma), the omnipresent one, thus addressed

by his mother, obtaining illusory manhood, cried due to his being a child.

91-93. Then queen Kausalyā of a beautiful waist and auspicious characteristics, joyfully embraced her son and gave him (i.e. fed him with) milk from her breast. The eternal one drank (sucked) milk from her breast as a child; the great lord, the sustainer of the world remained on his mother's lap. Citizens and countrymen, being delighted, celebrated a festival in that auspicious, charming region, giving all desired objects of men.

94-96. Bharata produced from the Pāñcajanya (conch of Viṣṇu) was born to Kaikeyī. Sumitrā gave birth to Lakṣmaṇa of auspicious signs. The glorious one also gave birth to Śatrughna, the tormentor of his enemies. Lakṣmaṇa, the killer of the enemy's heroes, was born with a portion of (the snake) Ananta. Śatrughna, of unlimited valour, was produced from Sudarśana. They all grew there in the family of Vaivasvata Manu.

97-98. The sons were properly taught by the very vigorous Vasiṣṭha. The princes studied the Vedas and were proficient in general knowledge. They knew the essential nature of all branches of knowledge, and were skilled in archery. They were very generous and they increased the joy of people.

99. The princes Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa formed a pair. Similarly Bharata and Śatrughna formed a pair.

100-104. Then Lakṣmī, the chief goddess of the worlds, who was beautiful, who resembled a crore of young suns, whose hands were like red lotuses, who was endowed with all (good) characteristics, who was adorned with all ornaments, who, the beautiful one, had worn on her bosom a garland of fresh flowers, was born in Janaka's house, at the opening of a furrow, at an auspicious moment in an auspicious field dug up by Indra's plough. Seeing that girl, auspicious and full of all Vedas, the lord of Mithilā took her out and nourished her as (his) child. The chief goddess, dear to the lord of worlds, grew in the charming house of Janaka for the protection of the entire world.

105-110. In the meanwhile, O goddess, the great sage, Kauśika, well known in the world, commenced the performance of a sacrifice in the established hermitage on the auspicious, meritorious bank of Bhāgīrathī. When that sacrifice of the brāhmaṇa proceeded, the demons of Rāvaṇa destroyed his sacrifice. Pious Kauśika,

having thought, desired to bring for the good of the world, Viṣṇu (i.e. Rāma) born in Raghu's family. Having gone to the charming city of Ayodhyā protected by (Daśaratha, the descendant of) Raghu, the best sage saw Daśaratha, the best king. The king of a great lustre too, having seen Kauśika, got up, and with the palms of his hands joined, saluted, along with his sons, the best sage.

111-112a. The descendant of Raghu, saying, "I am fortunate" honoured the best sage with proper rite after seating him on an excellent seat. Having taken himself round him, and saluted him, he said to him: "What do (i.e. should) I do?" Then Viśvāmitra, with great penance (to his credit), and with his mind delighted, said:

Viśvāmitra said:

112b-113. O king, give me Rāma for the protection of my sacrifice. In Rāma's vicinity (i.e. presence) may my sacrifice be fruitful. Therefore, O king, please give (me) Rāma for the protection of (my) sacrifice.

The lord said:

114-116. Hearing the words of the best sage, he, the best among the all-knowing ones, gave the best sage, Rāma with Lakṣmaṇa. Taking Rāma (with him), that best brāhmaṇa Viśvāmitra with great penance (to his credit), and being pleased, went to his hermitage. When the best descendant of Raghu went (with the sage), gods were delighted. The very lustrous ones sent down showers of flowers, and praised (him).

117-118. Then the very powerful Garuḍa, delighted in heart, came there unseen by beings, and having approached (the best descendant of) Raghu (i.e. Rāma), gave the two (i.e. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa) two bows, two quivers, and two inexhaustible arrows. The bird also gave them divine missiles, weapons, and left.

119-123. The two heroes, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, were informed of the fierce-looking demoness moving in the forest by the noble Kauśika. O goddess, her name was Tāḍakā, and she was the wife of the demon Sunda. The two great heroes struck her with arrows discharged from their divine bows. Struck (with his arrow) by Rāma, the fierce-looking demoness gave up her

fierce form, and became one of a divine form. She was glowing with her body, was adorned with all ornaments; having saluted the two (best descendants of) Raghu, she went to Viṣṇu's world. Having killed her the celebrated and very lustrous Rāma entered, with the noble Lakṣmaṇa, the auspicious hermitage of Kauśika.

124-126. Then the delighted sages, having gone forth to meet the best of Raghus, seated him, and worshipped the highest soul with materials of worship etc. The best sage Kauśika, being initiated along with the sages properly commenced the excellent sacrifice. When the great sacrifice proceeded, a demon named Mārīca, along with his brother Subāhu, came there to create an obstacle.

127-129. Seeing the two fierce demons, Rāma, killer of his enemy's heroes, killed Subāhu, the lord of demons, with one arrow. With a great wind-missile, he caused Mārīca to fall into the ocean as wind causes a dry leaf (to fall down). That best demon, seeing the great valour of Rāma, put down his weapons and went to a great hermitage to practise penance.

130-132a. Viśvāmitra, of great lustre, worshipped Rāma there with a pleased mind after the great sacrifice was over. The best sage, having embraced the noble one who had side-locks on his temples, who was dark like a lotus-leaf, whose eyes were large like lotus-leaves, and having smelt his head, praised him.

132b-141. In the meanwhile, the lord of lords, king of Mithilā commenced, with the (help of) best sages, the Vājapeya sacrifice. To see it all sages of auspicious hearts led by Viśvāmitra went along with best of the Raghus (to Mithilā). With the lotus-like foot of that Rāma who was going (to Mithilā), the land was purified, and the great stone was approached. That Ahalyā too, who was formerly cursed by her husband Gautama, became auspicious by the touch of Rāma's foot. Then the best sages having reached the city of Mithilā with the two descendants of Raghu (viz. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa) were delighted at heart. The very powerful king of Mithilā having seen the illustrious ones to have come, went forth to meet them and honoured them. (He saw) Rāma whose eyes were large like lotuses, who resembled a lotus-leaf (in complexion), who had put on a yellow garment, was gentle, had tender limbs and was bright, who, the excellent

one, had slighted Cupid with his handsomeness, who was endowed with all (good) marks, was decorated with all ornaments, who, the slender Viṣṇu, was born in the heart-lotus of the highest god, with the highest virtues like good character, as one lamp would be produced (i.e. lighted) from another. Seeing that Raghunātha, Janaka was delighted at heart.

142-145a. He looked upon Rāma, Daśaratha's son, just as the highest lord. Saying, "I am fortunate" he honoured the descendant of Kakutstha. He took that to be the favour of Viṣṇu, Vāsudeva. The lord thought to his mind to give him (in marriage) his daughter. Knowing the two to be sons from Raghu's family, the best king honoured them in accordance with Dharma with bright garments and ornaments. With honour like *madhuparka* he worshipped the sages.

145b-148. Then at the end of the sacrifice, the lotus-eyed Rāma broke the divine bow of Śiva and won Janaka's daughter. The lord of Mithilā, very much pleased with the great purchase-price in the form of (Rāma's) valour, gladly gave her (in marriage) to him, as formerly the great Ocean gave Lakṣmī to Viṣṇu. The lord of Mithilā sent a messenger to (Daśaratha) the descendant of Raghu. The pious one entered Mithilā with his two sons.

149-153. That best descendant of Raghu stayed along with the delighted Vasiṣṭha, Vāmadeva, etc. in Janaka's charming city. The king properly honoured by king Janaka got Rāma married to the Earth's daughter (i.e. Sītā) at an auspicious time. The king got Urmilā, Janaka's daughter, married to Lakṣmaṇa, and the two daughters of good figures and having all (auspicious) marks, Māṇḍavī and Śrutakīrti to Bharata and Śatrughna respectively. Then having completed the nuptial rites the powerful, happy Daśaratha surrounded by citizens and (other) subjects started for Ayodhyā.

154-156. Receiving the wedding present, and honoured by the king of Mithilā, he, along with his sons, daughters-in-law, horses, elephants and attendants (left for Ayodhyā). On their way, the very strong and valorous son of Jamadagni, the destroyer of kings, taking an axe, like an angry lion desiring to fight, ran to the descendant of Kakutstha. Reaching Rāma, and seeing him, Bhārgava spoke (these) words:

Paraśurāma said:

157-159. O Rāma, Rāma of mighty arms, listen to my words. Having killed many very brave kings in battles, and having given the land to brāhmaṇas I went to practise penance. Having heard about your valour and power, I have come to fight with you. The Ikṣvākus born in the family of my maternal grandfather are not to be killed by me. Having heard (i.e. when I hear) about the valour of a kṣatriya and his power, I cannot bear it.

160-162. O prince, you broke the fierce bow of Śiva difficult to be assailed. Therefore, O best of Raghus, O liberal one, fight with me. O you who curb your enemies, this is Viṣṇu's bow which is like that (bow of Śiva). Fix (an arrow to it). Then I am vanquished (by you) with your valour. Or abandon your weapons before me, the powerful one. If you are afraid in your heart, then submit to me, O Kākutstha.

The lord said:

163-166. Kākutstha (i.e. Rāma), the brave one, thus addressed by Paraśurāma, took his bow and the power too of him (given to him) by Viṣṇu. Deprived of that power, that brave Paraśurāma became powerless and lustreless like a brāhmaṇa deprived of (holy) acts. Seeing Paraśurāma lustreless, the best kings repeatedly praised Rāma (with the words): "Well (done), well (done)." Rāma having easily raised the bow and fixed the arrow to it, spoke to Paraśurāma, who was amazed:

Rāma said:

167. O brāhmaṇa, what should I do to you with this best arrow? Do (i.e. should) I cut off this world, the nether (world) or heaven, or should I destroy your penance?

The lord said:

168. Bhārgava, seeing that very fierce arrow of Rāma and knowing him to be the highest self, was delighted, and said to Rāma:

Paraśurāma said:

169-176. O Rāma, Rāma of mighty arms, I did not know you to be the ancient (soul). Today only I knew you by means

of your virtues like valour. You are actually the first, highest soul. You are the highest Brahman. You are the highest, the immutable one. You are Ananta (the endless one), great Viṣṇu, Vāsudeva, higher than the highest. You are Nārāyaṇa. You are the lord of Śrī. You are full of the three (Vedas). You are the Time (or Death). You are the entire world. You yourself are the one called *A*. You are the creator, the supporter and the destroyer. You are the highest lord. You are inconceivable; you are of the form of a great being; you are a great hymn. You are the highest being having four, six, five qualities. You are the sacrifice. You are the vaṣaṭkāra (i.e. exclamation used on making an oblation). You are the *Oṁ* consisting of the three (Vedas). You are of a manifest and an unmanifest form. You possess qualities. You are qualityless and the highest one. I am unable to praise you who are beyond the scope of even the Vedas. O lord, you, the absolute one (should) please forgive me my rash behaviour towards you. Having conquered, due to your power, all princes and having given the earth to the brāhmaṇas, I obtain peace due to your favour only.

The lord said:

177-185. Having spoken like this, Paraśurāma of a great penance (to his credit) having gone round and saluted Rāma, the protector of the world, offered the heaven merited by having performed one hundred sacrifices to that missile. Rāma of a great lustre, then saluted the great sage. He duly worshipped him with water for washing his feet, materials of worship and water for being sipped. Paraśurāma, of a great penance (to his credit), honoured by him went to the hermitage of Nara-Nārāyaṇa, for practising penance. And the mighty king Daśaratha, along with his sons and wives, entered his own city at an auspicious moment. Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata and Śatrughna, having approached their wives, amused themselves with their minds delighted. Rāma, the pious one amused himself with Sītā for twelve years, like Viṣṇu amusing himself with Lakṣmī. At that time only king Daśaratha affectionately desired to bestow his kingdom upon his eldest son (Rāma). His dear wife Kaikayī who was given (two) boons (by him) formerly, asked the best king for the coronation of Bharata and banishment of Rāma for fourteen years.

186-188. That king, with his mind struck by grief, (and) due to being veracious, banished his son. Rāma, the descendant of Kakutstha, though capable (of snatching the kingdom), righteously left it for him, and to (keep) the promise of his father, went, with Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā, to the forest to kill Rāvaṇa. That king (Daśaratha), afflicted by the separation from his son, died.

189-190. Pious Bharata, being appointed to the kingdom along with the ministers showing that he was a good brother, did not desire the kingdom. Having come to the forest, he requested (Rāma) his brother and the descendant of Kakutstha. Rāma who curbed his enemies, did not desire the kingdom as a result of his father's order.

191-193. He gave him his own sandals. He (i.e. Bharata) too received them with devotion. Bharata brought Rāma's auspicious sandals to the kingdom, and he, Kaikayī's son, everyday worshipped them with sandal, with flowers. And the best king, being engaged in the practice of penance, remained in it (i.e. the kingdom). Till the noble Rāma came (back to Ayodhyā) all the citizens remained engaged in vows.

194. Rāma with Sītā enjoyed himself on the mountain like Citrakūṭa, in the holy hermitage of Bharadvāja, and the holy water of Mandākinī.

195-202. Sometime the magnanimous Rāma was resting (with his head) on Sītā's lap. Indra's crow came there and went about him. He, seeing Jānakī there and being tormented by Cupid's arrow, tore her plump and raised breast with his sharp nails. King Rāma, seeing the crow, took a darbha with his hand and uniting it with the missile of Brahman, discharged it. The crow, seeing the fierce blade of grass, with its form full of flames, and crying with a distressed tone, ran away. Rāma's very fierce missile followed the crow. The crow, oppressed by fear, wandered in the three worlds. Wherever the crow, desiring shelter, went, the fearful missile of Rāma went after him. The crow, tormented by the missile and (therefore) seeking a shelter, quickly went to Brahmā, Indra, Rudra, Yama and Varuṇa. All the wise gods like Rudra and the demons, seeing the crow, said: "We are not able to protect (you)." Then Brahmā, the lord of the three worlds, said (to the crow):

Brahmā said:

203-205. O best of crows, submit yourself to him only. He, the glorious one alone, is the ocean of pity for all. He, the lord of beings, endowed with qualities like good character and affectionate to those who have sought his shelter, will certainly protect you. He is the father, the mother, the companion and the friend of the entire world. Seek the refuge of the lord of gods. O bird, there is no other refuge.

Mahādeva said:

206-208. Thus addressed by Brahmā, the crow, overcome by fear, suddenly approached Rāma and fell on the ground. Seeing the crow in peril of life, Sītā politely said to her lord, the mighty (Rāma), "Protect him, protect him." The respectable lady Sītā put the head of the crow that had fallen before her on Rāma's feet.

209-211. The virtuous Rāma, the ocean of the nectar of pity and afflicted by compassion, raised him with his hand and protected him. Rāma, the treasure of compassion, said to the crow: "Do not be afraid. I shall grant you protection from fear. Go as you please." He, protected by Rāma, repeatedly saluted Rāma and Sītā, and quickly went to heaven.

212-213. Then Rāma, along with Sītā and the intelligent Lakṣmaṇa, being praised by great sages, lived on the Citrakūṭa mountain. Rāma, the best of the Raghus, being worshipped on it by Bharadvāja, went to the very huge hermitage of Atri.

214-217. The excellent pious sage, seeing the best of the Raghus to have come, with joy went forth with his wife to greet him. Having seated him, along with Sītā, on a very auspicious and divine seat, he affectionately offered him materials of worship, water for washing his feet and for sipping, and various garments, *madhuparka*, so also ornaments and unction. His wife Anasūyā affectionately gave Sītā divine and excellent garments and bright ornaments. She fed Rāma with divine food, drink and eatables, etc.

218-219. Prince Rāma, along with Lakṣmaṇa, very devoutly honoured by him, lived there for a day. When it dawned, Rāma got up, took himself round the great sage, saluted him, and set about going.

220-221. Permitted by him the lotus-eyed Rāma went to the Daṇḍaka forest thronged by great sages. There he killed the very fierce demon named Virādha and then entered the auspicious hermitage of Śarabhaṅga.

222. He, on seeing Rāma, had his sins instantly destroyed and went, along with gandharvas and celestial nymphs to Brahmā's world.

223-224. One by one Rāma went to the hermitages of Sutīkṣṇa, of Agastya, of Agastya's brother also, and was honoured by them. Then Rāma lived very happily and for a long time in Pañcavaṭī, on the auspicious bank of Godāvarī.

225-227. On going there the greatest sages, the religious ascetics, worshipped the lotus-eyed Rāma, the lord of the souls. They acquainted him with the threat coming from the hosts of demons. Having comforted them, he gave them the gift of fearlessness. After being honoured by him they went to their own hermitages. Rāma passed thirteen happy years there.

228-229a. After sometime, the demoness, Rāvaṇa's unconquerable sister of a fierce form, entered the charming Pañcavaṭī on the auspicious bank of Godāvarī.

229b-235a. Having seen the excellent Raghu (i.e. Rāma) resembling a crore of Cupids, dark like lotus-leaves, having large, lotus-like eyes, a raised nose, large arms, a conch-like neck, and a large chin, resembling a red lotus, with his palms marked with lotuses, adorned with a row of nails like the spotless moon resembling glossy and tender dūrvā (grass), an auspicious treasure of delicacy, wearing a yellow silken garment, adorned with all ornaments, of the age of a youth, having a body deluding the world, the demoness, oppressed by Cupid's arrows, approached Rāma having lotus-like eyes, and said to him:

The demoness said:

235b-236. Who are you, dwelling in the Daṇḍaka forest in the guise of an ascetic? Why have you come to (this forest) difficult to be approached (even) by demons? Quickly tell the truth. (Please) do not tell a lie.

Maheśvara said:

237-240a. That Rāma, thus addressed, laughed and said:

Rāma said:

I am king Daśaratha's son, called Rāma. This archer is my innocent younger brother, Lakṣmaṇa. This is my dear wife Sītā, Janaka's daughter. By my father's order I have come to this forest. With a desire to do good to the sages, we are roaming in this great forest. O beautiful lady, why have you come to my hermitage? Who are you? In whose family are you born? Tell me the whole truth.

Maheśvara said:

240b. Thus addressed by Rāma, she said fearlessly:

The demoness said:

241-245a. O king, I am the daughter of Viśravas and the sister of Rāvaṇa. I am Śūrpaṇakhā by name, and am well-known in the three worlds. O lord, this Daṇḍaka forest is given to me by my brother. Eating groups of sages I roam in the great forest. Seeing you, an excellent sage, I, tormented by Cupid's arrows, and being very fearless, have come (here) with a desire to dally with you. O best king, please be my husband. O king, I desire to devour this Sītā (wife) of you. With you I shall dally in the forest with prominent mountains.

Maheśvara said:

245b-252a. Seeing the demoness, after having spoken like this, ready to devour Sītā, Śrī Rāma raised his sword and cut off her nose and ears. The demoness, with her face deformed, and weeping with fear, entered Khara's house, and told him Rāma's act. He, the killer of his enemies, surrounded by thousands of demons, and with Dūṣaṇa and Triśiras, came to fight violently with Rāma. Rāma easily killed those demons of huge bodies in the fearful forest with arrows resembling Death (i.e. with fatal arrows). With arrows resembling serpents he knocked down in the battle Khara, Triśiras and the very powerful Dūṣaṇa. Having killed all the demons living in the Daṇḍaka forest, and worshipped by hosts of gods and praised by great sages, (Rāma) lived in Daṇḍaka forest with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa.

252b-255a. Learning about the murder of the demons, Rāvaṇa, rendered violent with anger, came along with the wicked

Mārīca to Janasthāna. That demon Rāvaṇa came to Pañcavaṭī with Mārīca of an illusory deer-form, and when Daśaratha's sons were away from the hermitage he, desiring his own murder, kidnapped Sītā, the wife of Rāma.

255b-257a. The powerful Jaṭāyu, the king of vultures, seeing her being kidnapped, fought due to his affection for Rāma with the demon. Rāvaṇa who resisted his enemies, killed him with the strength of his arms and entered the city of Laṅkā.

257b-261. Having kept Sītā in the Aśoka-grove he, desiring death by Rāma's arrow, entered his house. And Rāma having killed the demon Mārīca who had taken up the form of a deer, again came there (i.e. to his hermitage) with his brother Lakṣmaṇa. Coming to know that Sītā was kidnapped by a demon, the very intelligent son of Daśaratha, being tormented by great grief, lamented. Looking for Sītā in the forest, he, on his way seeing a very mighty vulture fallen on the ground with his feet and wings cut off and with his entire body full of blood, was amazed.

262a. The glorious Rāma asked him: "Who desired to kill you and why?"

262b. The vulture, on seeing Rāma, very gently spoke:

The vulture said:

263. O Rāma, the mighty Rāvaṇa has kidnapped your wife. He, the chief of the demons, struck me in the battle.

Maheśvara said:

264-266. Having spoken like this, he suddenly cast his life before Rāma. Rāma performed his obsequies according to the Vedic precepts. And he gave him his own eternal abode, fit to be reached by meditating saints. The best bird, the vulture, attained salvation, the final position due to the common form of Viṣṇu. Then Rāma went to Mālyavat (mountain), to the auspicious hermitage of Mataṅga.

267-270. He went to the pious, glorious Śabarī. That best among Viṣṇu's devotees, seeing Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, went forth to greet them. Having saluted and seated them on a seat of *darbhas*, she washed their feet. With her mind full of joy she devoutly worshipped them with fragrant wild flowers. She, of a firm vow, then offered the two descendants of Raghu (viz. Rāma and Lakṣ-

maṇa) fragrant fruits and sweet roots. (Rāma,) the descendant of Kakutstha, gave her the highest liberation.

271-273. Then Rāma, killer of his enemies, having gone to the Pampā lake killed there the demon Kabandha of a fierce form. The very vigorous one, having killed him, burnt him. (Then) he (i.e. Kabandha) went to heaven. Then the lotus-eyed Rāma, having gone to Godāvarī, asked her, "O Gaṅgā, do you know my dear (wife) Sītā?" That Gaṅgā, covered with ignorance, did not tell him (anything).

274-275. Rāma angrily cursed her: "Be of red water." Then being dejected she through fear, led by great sages, and being helpless and with the palms of her hands joined sought Rāma's refuge. Then all great sages said to the eternal Rāma:

The sages said:

276. Gaṅgā, purifying the three worlds, has risen from your lotus-like feet. O lord of the world, you alone can free her from the curse.

Maheśvara said:

277a. Then the pious Rāma, affectionate to those who seek his shelter, said:

Rāma said:

277bc. May this Gaṅgā, destroying sins, be free from my curse merely by Śabarī's bath and united with auspicious water.

278-279. Speaking like this, the very powerful Rāma made, with the tip of his Śārṅga bow, the Śabari-tīrtha like Gaṅgā and Gayā. In its water was the holy place of great devotees of Viṣṇu. "Undoubtedly that form becomes venerable to the world."

280-282a. Speaking like this the descendant of Kakutstha went to Ṛṣyamūka mountain. Then on the bank of Pampā lake he was joined by the monkey Hanūmat. At his words (i.e. request) he came in contact with Sugrīva. At the words (i.e. request) of Sugrīva, Rāma, having bound Vālin, the lord of monkeys, consecrated Sugrīva on that kingdom.

282b-287. And the lord of monkeys desiring to find out

Sītā, sent heroes like Hanūmat. Hanūmat, the son of Wind, entered the city of Laṅkā and saw (there) the helpless Sītā emaciated due to fasting and being very much grieved, with her body smeared with dirt and mud, and wearing a dirty garment. The monkey, having shown her the token of recognition and having told her the news (about Rāma), having killed seven sons of the ministers, so also Rāvaṇa's son, after having uprooted the pillar of the gateway, and having cheered up Sītā, destroyed the grove, the garden-keepers, the servants and the chief leaders of the army.

288-291. By chance he was arrested by Rāvaṇa's son. Seeing the lord of demons and having also talked to him, the monkey burnt the city of Laṅkā with the fire from his (burning) tail. Having taken the token of recognition given by her (i.e. Sītā) he again came (back to Rāma). The very lustrous chief of monkeys, approached the lotus-eyed Rāma and reported to him that he had actually seen Sītā. Rāma, with Sugrīva, and surrounded by many monkeys, went to the shore of the great ocean, and kept his army there.

292-294. Rāvaṇa's younger brother called Bibhīṣaṇa, who was pious, veracious, and best among the great devotees of Viṣṇu, knowing Rāma to have arrived, abandoned his elder brother (Rāvaṇa), so also the kingdom, sons, wife, and submitted himself to Rāma. At the words of Hanūmat the lord accepted him, and granting protection to the gentle one, consecrated him on the kingdom (i.e. the throne) of the demons.

295-297. Then Rāma, the descendant of Kakutstha, desiring to cross the ocean, approached him, and he, the mighty one, seeing the very clean water, took up the Śārṅga bow and dried up the ocean with volleys of arrows. Then the ocean, the lord of rivers, yielded himself to the descendant of Kakutstha (i.e. Rāma), the treasure of pity. Then Rāma again filled the ocean with the Varuṇa missile.

298-299. Then on the ocean, the abode of alligators, Nala constructed a bridge with rocks brought by the monkeys. Then the great army entered the city of Laṅkā, and a great battle between the monkeys and the demons was fought.

300-306. Then Rāvaṇa's very mighty son Indrajit bound both Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa with magical nooses (literally, serpent-

nooses). Garuḍa, having come (there), let loose the nooses. The very powerful monkeys killed all the demons. In the battle Rāma killed Rāvaṇa's younger brother, the very strong Kumbhakarṇa, with arrows resembling flames of fire. With the missile presided over by Brahmā the angry Indrajit knocked down the monkeys. The mountain having great herbs was brought by Hanūmat. And all got up (alive) by the touch of it that was brought. Then Rāma's brave younger brother (i.e. Lakṣmaṇa), knocked down with arrows Indra's conqueror (i.e. Indrajit) as Indra did Vṛtra. The very strong Rāvaṇa set out with his complete army and ministers to fight with Rāma on the battlefield. The battle between the monkeys and demons took place on all sides.

307-321. A battle took place between Rāma and Rāvaṇa; so also with Lakṣmaṇa. The lord of demons knocked down Lakṣmaṇa with (the missile called) Śakti. Then the angry Rāma, of great lustre and the destroyer of the demons, killed the demon soldiers with arrows resembling Yama, the god of death, and destroying eveything. Rāma very much covered the demon Rāvaṇa with thousands of blazing arrows resembling the rod of (Yama, the god of) Death. The demon, with his entire body pierced with missiles of Rāma, fled through fear from the battlefield to Laṅkā. Seeing the world full of Rāma, he entered his house through dejection. Then Hanūmat brought the great mountain with great herbs. Due to that Rāma's younger brother regained consciousness. Then with a desire for victory Rāvaṇa commenced a sacrifice. The chief monkeys then destroyed it of a magical form. Then Rāvaṇa again set out, after getting into a divine chariot and along with many demons, to fight with Rāma. Then the intelligent Indra sent to Rāma a divine chariot, yoked with bay horses and with a charioteer. The best of the Raghus, having got into the chariot brought by Mātalin (Indra's charioteer), and being praised by hosts of gods, fought with that demon. Then a great, very fierce battle, with weapons and missiles took place day and night for a week between Rāma and Rāvaṇa. All the gods, remaining in aeroplanes, witnessed the battle. The best of the Raghus cut off the heads of Rāvaṇa, which many times sprang up due to the boon of Śiva. Rāma quickly discharged a very fierce missile sacred to Brahmā and resembling the fire at the time of the deluge to kill the wicked one. That missile, dis-

charged by Rāghava, tore Rāvaṇa's chest, pierced the earth and went to the nether world, and being honoured by serpents (again) came back to Rāma's hand. That great demon losing his life, fell down and died.

322-325. Then all the hosts of gods with their minds full of joy, dropped showers of flowers on the noble lord of the world. The chiefs of gandharvas sang (his praise) and bevies of celestial nymphs danced. So also auspicious breezes blew, and the sun was very bright. Sages, siddhas, gods and kinnaras praised (him). The best of the Raghu-family consecrated the greatest demon Bibhīṣaṇa on the throne of Laṅkā, and looked upon himself as having accomplished his object. Having consecrated Bibhīṣaṇa Rāma then said these words to Bibhīṣaṇa:

Rāma said:

326-327. As long as the moon and the sun exist, as long as the earth exists, as long as my account exists, the kingdom (of Laṅkā) will rest with Bibhīṣaṇa. Being very powerful, reach, along with the host of your sons and grandsons, my divine, ancient abode accessible to meditating saints.

The lord said:

328-330. The very mighty one, Rāma, having thus given a boon to the demon and having approached Sītā, spoke many harsh and censurable words to her in the assembly of people. The chaste lady much censured by him entered fire. Then all the hosts of gods led by Śiva, Brahmā, seeing the mother (i.e. Sītā) entering fire, were afflicted by fear, and approaching the greatest of Raghus, said, with their palms joined, to him:

Gods said:

331-339. O Rāma, Rāma, O you of large arms and of a great valour, listen. Sītā is extremely pure. She never violates your norms of conduct. You should not abandon her wrongly, as the sun does not give up his light. She is the mother of the entire world, and is support of the whole world. Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarṇa were your former highly devoted servants. Due to the curse of Sanaka etc. they were born on the earth. For their liberation Sītā was seized (by Rāvaṇa) in the Daṇḍaka forest.

The two pre-eminent demons were killed by you. They are (now) liberated, and with their sons, grandsons and followers have gone to heaven. You are Viṣṇu; you are the highest Brahman; you are the ancient one meditated upon by the meditating saints. You alone, of all gods, are the immutable (god) without a beginning or an end. You are the glorious Nārāyaṇa. Sītā is the ancient Lakṣmī. She is the mother of all the worlds. You, O highest lord, are the father. This mother of the world is eternal and shall never abandon you. O best of the Raghus, as you are omnipresent, so also she is. Therefore, O you descendant of Kakutstha, O you gentle one, accept this chaste Sītā of a good conduct and a strong vow, as (Lakṣmī) from the Milky Ocean.

The lord said:

340. In the meanwhile Fire, the observer of the world, brought Sītā there, and handed her over to Rāma in the vicinity (i.e. the presence) of gods. Fire, present in all bodies, then said to the descendant of Kakutstha:

Fire said:

341. O lord, this Sītā is of a good conduct and is sinless. O Rāma, accept her quickly. I have told you the truth.

The lord said:

342-343. Then Rāma, the descendant of Raghu, having accepted Sītā at the words of Fire, (and) being worshipped by the best gods, was pleased. Those excellent monkeys who were killed in the battle by the demons, came back to life and got up due to the boon of the grandsire.

344-347. Then (Bibhīṣaṇa,) the lord of demons gave Rāma the aeroplane named Puṣpaka which resembled the sun, which belonged to Kubera, and which was seized (from Kubera) by his brother (Rāvaṇa). He (also) gave Rāma garments and ornaments. The brave, glorious Rāma, Daśaratha's son, honoured by him got into the excellent aeroplane along with Sītā and his brave brother Lakṣmaṇa, so also along with the hosts of bears and monkeys, the noble Sugrīva, the brave Bibhīṣaṇa, and the very mighty demons.

348-352a. All the bears, monkeys and demons got into the

aeroplane and the ever-liberated noble ones got into an aeroplane of Vaikuṇṭha. Rāma, being praised by best gods, proceeded to Ayodhyā. Rāma of a genuine valour went to Bharadvāja's hermitage, and sent Hanūmat near Bharata. The best monkey having gone to the fisherman's house, saw Guha, a devotee of Viṣṇu, and told him about Rāma's arrival. Then from there he went to Nandigrāma, saw Rāma's younger brother and told him about the joyous occasion of Rāma's arrival.

352b-357. Having learnt from the monkey (i.e. Hanūmat) about the arrival of Rāma, Bharata, along with his younger brother and friends, obtained incomparable joy. Having again come back to Rāma, Hanūmat, the son of Wind, told all that Bharata did. Rāma also along with his younger brother got down from the best aeroplane and saluted with his wife Bharadvāja, the treasure of penance. The sage honoured the descendant of Kakutstha along with his younger brother by (offering him) cooked food, fruits, roots etc. and garments and ornaments. Honoured by him, Rāma saluted the best sage, and permitted by him, again, along with his followers, and surrounded by his friends went to Nandigrāma in the Puṣpaka (aeroplane).

358-361. Kekayī's son (Bharata) with his younger brother and along with his ministers and chief citizens, so also strong best kings, gladly went forth to greet his elder brother (Rāma). Approaching the best of Raghus, he, surrounded by his followers, saluted him. Rāma, the tormentor of his enemies, got down from the Puṣpaka aeroplane, and embraced Bharata and Śatrughna. The very lustrous one, along with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa, saluted his family priest Vasiṣṭha, and relatives like his old mothers.

362-368a. Bharata embraced Bibhīṣaṇa, Sugrīva, Jāmbavanta, so also Aṅgada, Hanūmat and Suṣeṇa. After an auspicious bath along with his brother and attendants, he, having divine flowers and garments and smeared with divine sandal and being praised by gods, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa, got into a divine auspicious chariot occupied by Sumanta. Bharata, Sugrīva, Śatrughna and Bibhīṣaṇa, Aṅgada and Suṣeṇa, Jāmbavat, Hanūmat, Nīla, Nala, Subhaga, Śarabha, Gandhamādana and other brave monkeys, so also Guha, the lord of the Niṣādas, very brave demons and very powerful greatest kings, mounted many auspicious elephants and horses.

368b-369. The highly lustrous one entered the indestructible city of Sāketa to the accompaniment of many auspicious musical instruments, many eulogies, and along with bears, monkeys, demons and excellent warriors of Niṣādas (i.e. fishermen). Prince Rāma, on seeing the capital, and thinking only of his father king (Daśaratha) on the way, entered the house purified by the movements of the meritorious feet of Sugrīva, Māruti and Bibhīṣaṇa.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED FORTYTHREE

Rāma's Consecration

Śaṅkara said:

1-17a. On that auspicious day at an auspicious moment people performed auspicious acts for the consecration of the pious one. These sages—Vasiṣṭha, Vāmadeva, Jābāli, and Kaśyapa, Mārkaṇḍeya, Maudgalya, Parvata, so also Nārada, performed the auspicious consecration of the best king there with muttering of hymns and sacrifices. Having seated Rāma along with Sītā on an auspicious golden seat full of (i.e. decked with) jewels, as Viṣṇu with Lakṣmī, the sages who had fulfilled their vows, muttered the auspicious Vedic hymns in honour of Viṣṇu and consecrated the descendant of Kakutstha and the lord of the world with pure water which was purified with hymns, was (brought) from all holy places, was holy, which had auspicious substances in it, was furnished with tips of dūrvā grass, tulasī-leaves, flowers and sandal. At that most auspicious moment gods beat drums in heaven and dropped showers of flowers from all sides. With his queen (Sītā) the descendant of Raghu adorned with divine garments, ornaments, divine sandal and unguents and with various kinds of flowers looked superb in the company of the sages, the masters of the Vedas. At that time Lakṣmaṇa held the divine umbrella and chowrie. By his side(s) Bharata and Śatrughna stood brilliantly with fans. Bibhīṣaṇa, the lord of demons, gave him the mirror. Sugrīva, the lord of the monkeys, held a pitcher full (of water), and the very lustrous Jāmbavat

(held) a charming garland of flowers. Vālin's son gave Rāma a tāmbūla with camphor. Hunūmat (held) many divine lamps, and Suṣeṇa (held) an auspicious flag. The ministers, surrounding the noble one, waited upon him. Sṛṣṭi, Jayanta, Vijaya, Saurāṣṭra, Rāṣṭravardhana, Akopa, Dharmapāla, and Sumantra are said to be (his) ministers. Kings, best men, lords of various countries, citizens, traders, old men waited upon the king. He was surrounded by bears, chief monkeys, ministers, kings, demons, principal brāhmaṇas and servants.

17b-23. As the lord of Lakṣmī completely united with deities in the highest heaven (shines), similarly the best glorious king then shone in Sāketa. The hosts of gods seated in aeroplanes and with their minds full of joy, so also gandharvas and hosts of the celestial nymphs, praised with shouts of victory the descendant of Kakutstha, the best of the Raghus, whose hands reached his knees, who had worn a yellow garment, whose neck was like a conch, whose chest was large, who had (put on) beautiful ornaments, who was seated with queen (Sītā), and who was consecrated. Then Rāma, consecrated by great sages like Vasiṣṭha, shone with Sītā like god Viṣṇu with Lakṣmī. Śiva afraid due to Rāma's being a great mortal, of waiting on his lotus-like feet, seeing Rāma was pleased and with delight praised him. He folded the palms of his hands, was full of joy, and had a faltering (voice). He delighted all gods, sages and monkeys also.

Mahādeva said:

24-30. Salutation to the original source, to the eternal highest soul, to the one having the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss, to the one identical with the universe, to the creator. Salutation to Viṣṇu the bulb, the root of continuous joy, to the form delighting the three worlds; salutation to the one venerable to Brahmā and Indra, to one bringing about the welfare and giving protection from fear. Salutation to the one of the form of Viṣṇu. O you of the form of everything, salutation to you. Salutation to (you) the cause of creation, sustenance and destruction (of the world), to (you) of three qualities, to you of the form having no limitation, to the great soul. (Salutation to you) causing Nescience in the form of this goddess Sītā as a limiting adjunct. Salutation to both of you, the Puruṣa (the soul) and the Prakṛti

(the primordial matter), the author of the worlds. Salutation to the mother and the father of the world, to the mother (Sītā) and to Rāghava (i.e. Rāma). Salutation to you, of the form of visible world, and of the form without the visible world. Salutation to you, of the form of meditation, to the form of the Supreme Soul fit to be meditated upon by the meditating saints. Salutation to both of you devoid of change and no-change.

31-40. Salutation to you the supreme soul, of the form of the seed, to Sītā and to Rāma. Sītā is Lakṣmī; you are Viṣṇu. Sītā is Pārvatī; you are Śiva. Sītā herself is Sāvitrī; you are the four-faced Brahmā. Sītā is Indrāṇī; you are Indra. Sītā is Svāhā (the oblation made to all gods); you are Fire. Sītā is the destructive goddess; you are of the form of Yama. Sītā is all wealth; you are Kubera, O best of Raghus. Sītā is goddess Rudrāṇī; you are very strong Rudra. Sītā is goddess Rohiṇī; you are the Moon giving pleasure to the world. Sītā is Saṁjñā; you are the Sun. Sītā is the Night; you are the Day. Sītā is goddess Mahākālī. You always are Mahākāla. In the three worlds whatever is of the feminine gender is Sītā. Whatever is marked with the masculine gender is you, O lord. O lord of all gods, Sītā is the supporter everywhere. Then you are also there to protect. Her power sustains the universe. Therefore, the merit marked (acquired?) by you two is a crore-fold. Your deeds marked (described?) by Śiva and Śakti, give peace. O Rāma, we two are venerable to the world. You two are always venerable to us. Gaurī mutters your name. I mutter your formula. To one desiring to die at Maṇikarṇikā and remaining in half of its water I give your emancipating formula, giving (i.e. leading to) Brahman.

41. Therefore, O lord of Jānakī, you are certainly the highest Brahman. All deluded by you do not know you truly.

The lord said:

42-50. Thus addressed by Śambhu, Rāma who had assumed a divine form and was of a wonderful appearance, became disposed to favour. Seeing him of that form, men, monkeys and deities were not able even to see that lustrous, great, wonderful (form). The best gods, through fear saluted him devoutly. Rāma, realising that men, monkeys and deities were frightened, took up the illusory human form and again spoke to the gods:

Rāmacandra said:

O gods, listen. That man who will everyday praise me with the hymn told by Śiva, will be equal to a god. Freed from all sins he obtains my nature. In a battle he gets victory and is never repulsed. He is not tormented by ghosts, vampires and female deities to whom sacrifices are offered for destructive and magical purposes. A sonless man obtains a son. A maiden gets a husband. A poor man obtains wealth and would become virtuous and of good disposition. The glorious one has the power equal to that of the (highest) soul. There is no doubt about it. In all acts and undertakings men have no obstacle. Whatever desire, difficult to be fulfilled, is entertained by a man is satisfied within six months due to the grace of this eulogy. By means of this hymn is obtained the fruit a crore times more than the religious merit obtained in all holy places and all sacrifices.

The lord said:

51-53. Speaking like this Rāmacandra dismissed Maheśvara. He (also) dismissed all gods like Brahmā that had come there. Rāmacandra honoured all men and dismissed with affection all men, monkeys and deities full of love. All of them thus dismissed by him, went very much delighted, reciting the great hymn uttered by the lord and remembering Rāma of a universal form.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED FORTYFOUR

Rāma Goes to Heaven

Śaṅkara said:

1-6. Rāma enjoyed with Sītā royal pleasures as desired while protecting directions on all sides for a thousand years. All inmates of the harem, so also the citizens, censured Sītā who had stayed in the demon's house. Rāma who warded off his enemies, through fear of public scandal, and exhibiting human behaviour, abandoned the princess (Sītā) who was pregnant, in the assembly of sages in Vālmīki's holy hermitage in a large forest on the bank

of Gaṅgā. Dependent upon her husband she stayed in the sage's house. Taken care of by the sage Vālmīki, she was honoured by sages' wives. There only she gave birth to twin sons named Kuśa and Lava. Educated and trained by the sage they grew there only.

7-13a. Rāma too, along with his brothers, protected the earth. He, the king, endowed with virtues like restraint, and free from all enjoyments, always worshipping Viṣṇu having no beginning or end, and highly devoted to celibacy, ruled over the earth. Śatrughna, the righteous descendant of Raghu, having killed Lavaṇa, ruled, along with his two sons, over Mathurā created by gods. Bharata, having killed gandharvas on both the sides of Sindhu, installed his two very mighty sons in that country. The very powerful Lakṣmaṇa, having killed the Madras in the western Madra country, consecrated his two brave sons, and again going back to Ayodhyā, touched Rāma's feet. (Rāma,) the descendant of Kakutstha brought back to life the son of a brāhmaṇa that had met death, and then killed a śūdra ascetic.

13b-17. Then Rāma, the killer of his enemy's heroes performed a horse-sacrifice in the Naimiṣa (forest) in the assembly of people on the bank of Gautamī. Rāghava, knowing the highest truth, fashioned a golden (image of) Jānakī, and with that the very mighty one performed many sacrifices. The lord performed various sacrifices, complete with presents, like myriads of horse-sacrifices, Vājapeya sacrifices, Agniṣṭoma, Viśvajit, Gomedha and Śatakratu. In the meanwhile, Vālmīki of a very great (i.e. severe) penance (to his credit) brought Sītā there, and said these words to Rāma:

Vālmīki said:

18. O you of a good vow, you do not deserve to abandon (i.e. please do not abandon) sinless Sītā. This chaste one is free from passion and is like light to the sun. O descendant of Kakutstha, she is identical with you. O sinless one, why did you abandon her?

Rāma said:

19-22. O brāhmaṇa, from your words I understand that Sītā is sinless. The chaste lady was formerly kidnapped by Rāvaṇa in the secluded Daṇḍaka (forest). Having killed him in

battle, and having properly taken Sītā who was purified and who came out of Agni's mouth, I came to Ayodhyā (again). There was a great public scandal among the citizens. Being afraid of it I abandoned her of a good conduct, near you. Therefore, for satisfying the people, Sītā who is highly devoted to me, must convince the kings and great sages (of her innocence).

Maheśvara said:

23-24. Thus addressed the chaste Sītā put forward a proof amazing the people in the assembly of sages and kings. Showing those people her sole devotion to Rāma, the chaste Sītā, with the palms of her hands folded, said in the assembly of all (people):

Sītā said:

25-26. Since I have not thought of anyone except Rāma, may goddess Earth give me a cavity. Since I spoke the truth that I do not know anyone else but Rāma, Dharaṇī (i.e. the Earth) would at once come to her daughter Vaidehī.

Maheśvara said:

27-32. Then the lord of birds, the hero, knowing the mother (had come) from below the earth, held a seat full of jewels. Then goddess Dharaṇī, holding Sītā with both her hands, greeted her with a welcome, and seated her on the seat. Seeing her seated on the seat, the hosts of gods in heaven profusely and continuously scattered a shower of flowers on divine Sītā. She too, the ancient one, being honoured by divine damsels mounted on Garuḍa, and went to heaven by that path. On her front the goddess of the world was surrounded by hosts of maids. She reached the highest ancient abode, accessible to the meditating saints. Seeing her entering the lower world, all men shouted loudly: "Well (done), well (done), This is Sītā."

33-36. Rāma, overcome by grief, took both his sons and along with sages and best kings entered Sāketa. Then after a long time, (Rāma's) mothers who had fulfilled their vows, died and went to the heaven of their husband (i.e. to the heaven where Daśaratha had gone). Rāma who had fulfilled his vows righteously, ruled over the kingdom for ten thousand and ten hundred

years. Sometime the god of death came to Rāma's abode in the guise of an ascetic and spoke (these) words:

Death (Kāla) said:

37-38. O Rāma, Rāma, O you of large arms, I am sent by the Creator. O best of Raghus, O very intelligent one, listen to what I say. We shall carry on a conversation (lit. wordy duel). He who enters in between (i.e. disturbs us) will merit death.

Maheśvara said:

39. Promising him with the words "All right" the lotus-eyed Rāma placed Lakṣmaṇa at the door. Then Death spoke (these) words: Yama (Death) spoke to Rāma, Daśaratha's son:

Kāla (Death) said:

40-42. O Rāma, listen to what led to my arrival. You descended on the mortal world, saying, after having killed the two best demons: "I would live in the mortal world for ten thousand and ten hundred years." Thus (also) told by the hosts of gods (you have stayed for that much period). Now the time for you to go (back) to heaven has come. O sinless one, let the gods today have the lord in you.

Maheśvara said:

43. To the great sage Rāma said, "Let it be so". In the meanwhile the great ascetic Durvāsas came to the gate of the royal palace and spoke (these) words to Lakṣmaṇa:

Durvāsas said:

44. O prince, O descendant of Kakutstha, go quickly and report to Rāma (about the arrival of) me.

Maheśvara said:

45. To him Lakṣmaṇa said: "O brāhmaṇa, (Rāma has ordered that) no person should be allowed near (him)." Then the best sage overcome by anger said:

Durvāsas said:

46a. I shall pronounce a curse if you do not present me to Rāma, the descendant of Kakutstha.

Maheśvara said:

46b-53. Due to the fear of the curse (Lakṣmaṇa) reported to Rāma (the arrival of) the sage. There only Death causing fear to all beings vanished. The king worshipped sage Durvāsas that had come (there). That best Raghu, Lakṣmaṇa, knowing that promise of his elder brother, gave up his human form in the water of Sarayū. Giving up the human form he entered his own body. He having a thousand hoods, and having a lustre of a crore of moons, having divine flowers and garments, smeared with divine sandal, surrounded by thousands of serpent-damsels, well-adorned, having got into a divine aeroplane, went to the abode of Viṣṇu. The best Raghu Kākutstha (i.e. Rāma) knowing Lakṣmaṇa's going to heaven, also desired to go to heaven. Then Rāma, having consecrated his sons Kuśa and Lava, having divided wealth along with chariots, elephants and horses gave it to them. The best of Raghus installed righteously on his kingdom (i.e. throne) Kuśa at Kuśavatī and Lava at Śarasvatī.

54-58. Knowing the intention of Rāma who had realised his soul all the very powerful monkeys and demons came there. (They were) Bibhīṣaṇa, Sugrīva, Jāmbavat, (Māruti) the Wind's son, Nīla, Nala, Suṣeṇa, and Guha, the lord of the Niṣādas. Śatrughna also consecrated his brave sons as kings, and all of them came to Ayodhyā protected by Rāma. Having saluted the noble one, with their palms joined they said to him:

The monkeys and others said:

O best of the Raghus, having come to know that you are ready to go to heaven, we have come (here) to follow you. O lord, O Rāma, we cannot live without you (even) for a moment. Therefore, O large-eyed one, with you we shall go to the abode of gods.

Maheśvara said:

59. Thus addressed by them the descendant of Kakutstha said: "All right." Then the very lustrous one said to Bibhīṣaṇa, the lord of demons:

Rāma said:

60. Rule over your kingdom righteously. Do not falsify your promise. Being well pleased enjoy as long as the moon, the sun and the earth remain. Then at the (proper) time come to my place.

Maheśvara said:

61-62. Speaking like this the lotus-eyed Rāma affectionately gave to him his ancient (image of) Viṣṇu, gentle and lying (on Śeṣa) and the family deity of the Ikṣvākus. To Hanūmat Rāma, the killer of his enemies, said:

Rāma said:

63. O lord of monkeys, as long as my stories go on (being narrated) on the earth, remain on the earth. At the (proper) time, O you of a good vow, go to me.

Maheśvara said:

64a. Speaking like this to him, Rāma said to Jāmbavat:

Rāma said:

64b-65. When Dvāpara (age) will come, I shall again be born on the earth in the family of Yadus for destroying the burden of the earth. O best of bears, I shall (then) fight with you.

Maheśvara said:

66-72. The very powerful Rāma, the descendant of Kakutstha, having thus spoken to him, said to all the bears and monkeys (these words): "(Please) go." Ministers, traders, Bharata, the son of Kaikayī, determined to follow Rāma, came (there). Then the celibate, wearing white garments, went to the Supreme Spirit. Holding kuśas in his hands the restrained one went to the Supreme Spirit. To Rāma's right side was Ramā (i.e. Lakṣmī) with a lotus in her hand. Similarly to the side other than the right (i.e. to the left side) was goddess Dharaṇī (i.e. the earth). O Pārvatī, in the same way Vedas with the Vedāṅgas, Purāṇas with Itihāsas, Oṁkāra, Vaṣaṭkāra, so also Sāvitrī purifying the world, followed Rāma. Missiles, weapons like bows etc., all having male

bodies followed Rāma. Bharata and Śatrughna, so also all citizens with their sons, wives and attendants went after Rāma.

73-78. Ministers, hosts of attendants, servants, traders, so also monkeys, bears along with Sugrīva and with their sons, wives went after the very intelligent descendant of Kakutstha. Beasts and birds, so also all immobile and mobile objects went after the noble one. So also the best men who saw the descendant of Kakutstha going to heaven. They who thus followed Rāma, did not return. Then having gone over three yojanas he saw Sarayū on the western side. With his followers he entered Sarayū of auspicious water. Then Brahmā, the grandsire, surrounded by hosts of all gods, and along with sages praised the best among Raghus with (suitable) words. He said to Rāma who had entered the water of the Sarayū (river):

Brahmā said:

79-81. O Viṣṇu, come, prosperity to you. O you who honour (others), you have luckily come (here). With your brothers, lustrous like gods, enter your own body of Viṣṇu, which is very bright, divine and ancient. O god, you are the refuge of the world; only few do not take cognizance of you who are inconceivable, noble, immutable, and comprising everything. O you of great lustre, enter that body which you desire (to enter).

Maheśvara said:

82-91. When he was full of the sun's rays, and when showers of flowers were dropped on him, he abandoned the human form and entered his own body. Both the noble Śatrughna and Bharata, endowed with divine lustre, were with him with the conch and the disc, his portions. He, the four-armed one, who had a conch, a disc, a mace, and the Śārṅga (bow) in his hands, who was possessed of divine ornaments, who had (his body) smeared with divine sandal, who had worn divine yellow garments, whose eyes were like lotus-leaves, who was a youth, whose body was handsome, who was bright with delicate parts, whose hair was very glossy, dark and curly, who had auspicious marks, who was dark like fresh dūrvā-sprouts, whose face resembled the full moon, got along with the two goddesses into an aeroplane,

and he, the lord, of a great lustre, praised by all gods, sat on the divine throne at the root of the desire-yielding tree. Those bears, monkeys and men, just on touching the water of Sarayū, happily cast their life. Due to Rāma's grace all they were handsome and had divine forms. They had worn divine flowers and garments; they had divine, auspicious lustre. There were innumerable men. Śrī Rāma, having lotus-like eyes, surrounded by all, worshipped by hosts of gods and siddhas, praised by all gods, got into the aeroplane.

92-95. The lord came to his own eternal, divine, imperishable place. O you of a beautiful appearance, one who would recite the (full) account of Rāma, or would listen to a verse or half a verse or would devoutly remember it, would, being free from sins committed knowingly or unknowingly during crores of existences, reach, along with his sons and wife, without any effort, Viṣṇu's world, to be reached (only) through abstract meditation. O goddess, I have narrated to you this great account of Rāma. Due to the narration (of the account) of Rāma, I am blessed along with you, O goddess. O you of an excellent face, what else do you desire to know? I shall narrate all that.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED FORTYFIVE

The Brave Deeds of Kṛṣṇa

Śrī Pārvatī said:

1-2. O lord, you have told well the story of Rāma. Having heard it through your grace, I am happy, O great god. O lord of gods, I desire to hear the great story removing sins, of Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva.

Rudra said:

3-8a. O goddess, listen. I shall narrate (to you) the story giving all fruits to men, of the noble Kṛṣṇa, Vasudeva's son. O goddess, in the family of Yadus was born the son of Devamiḍha,

called Vasudeva, the best among those knowing Dharma. The prince duly married Devakī of a divine complexion, the daughter of Devaka (Ugrasena's brother), in Mathurā. Kaṁsa was the brave and very strong son of Ugrasena. With the two (Vasudeva and Devakī?) the charioteer was driving the excellent chariot (*obscure*). When they came on a charming path bringing on auspiciousness, a divine voice gravely spoke from the air:

The heavenly voice said:

8b. O Kaṁsa, her eighth embryo (i.e. child) will take away your life.

Rudra said:

9. Having heard it, Kaṁsa set about killing his sister, Vasudeva, with presence of mind, said to him who was very much enraged:

Vasudeva said:

10. O glorious one, do not kill your legitimate sister. O very mighty king, just kill the embryos (i.e. children) that will be born.

Rudra said:

11-13. Saying "All right", Kaṁsa having arrested Vasudeva and Devakī, placed them in his charming house full of all pleasures. In the meanwhile, O goddess, goddess Dharaṇī (i.e. the Earth) very much troubled by the burden of sinners, suddenly went to Brahmā. Having gone to Brahmā, the lord of the world, Dharaṇī, the supporter of the people, said with a grave voice:

Dharaṇī said:

14-16. O Creator, O lord, I am unable to support these people. O you of a good vow, the sinful demons have put up on me. The very powerful ones destroy all good practices of the world. All men deriving their strength from unrighteousness are deluded by sin. In this world very little of religious merit is seen. O god, I have sustained (people) because of (their) religious merit, truth, purity and control. Therefore, I am unable to sustain the world springing from unrighteousness.

Rudra said:

17-18. Speaking like this goddess Dharaṇī vanished there only. Then all hosts of gods led by Brahmā and Rudra and great ascetics went to the lord of the world at the northern shore of the Milky Ocean, and praised him with divine eulogies. Then the lord who was pleased, said to all those best sages:

The lord (*Viṣṇu*) *said*:

19a. O hosts of gods, for what purpose have you come here?

Rudra said:

19b. Then the grandsire said to Viṣṇu, the god of gods:

Brahmā said:

20-22a. O god of gods, O lord of the world, the Earth is oppressed with burden. In the world many unconquerable demons are born, like Jarāsandha, Kaṁsa, Pralamba, Dhenuka and others. The wicked ones torment all old people. You are fit to take down the burden of the Earth.

Rudra said:

22bc. Thus addressed by Brahmā, Viṣṇu, the immutable lord of the world, spoke with a grave voice:

The lord (*Viṣṇu*) *said*:

23. O very powerful gods, descending (i.e. being born) in the family of the Yadus, I shall cooly remove the burden of the Earth.

Rudra said:

24. Thus addressed, all gods, having saluted Viṣṇu, went to their respective worlds, and thought of that highest god. Then the highest lord said to the Nārāyaṇī Māyā:

The lord said:

25-28. Taking the six sons of Hiraṇyākṣa to the earth, put them into (the womb of) Devakī, the wife of Vasudeva. The seventh one, a portion of Śeṣa, has already entered (Devakī).

Do not tarry. O you of an auspicious appearance, give it to Rohiṇī, her co-wife. Then in the eighth my portion will be born on Devakī. Then Mahānidrā, your ancient portion, will be born on Yaśodā, Nanda's wife. She will go to the great mountain Vindhya, and there being worshipped by gods led by Indra would kill the very powerful demons led by the demon Śumbha.

Rudra said:

29-38. Saying, "All right" Mahāmayā put the sons of Hiraṇyākṣa as the six embryos in (the womb of) Devakī one by one. The very powerful Kaṁsa killed them as soon as they were born. The seventh embryo was infused by a portion of Śeṣa. (Mahāmayā) took the growing embryo into (the womb of) Rohiṇī. Due to drawing out (saṁkarṣaṇāt) of the embryo, the immutable Saṁkarṣaṇa was born on her. On the eighth of the dark half of Bhādrapada (he was born) at an auspicious moment. Rohiṇī gave birth to a son, the lord Saṁkarṣaṇa. Then all hosts of gods seated in aeroplanes in the sky, and with their minds full of joy, praised Devakī. Then, O Pārvatī, in the tenth month (of her pregnancy) Viṣṇu was born on her at mid-night of the eighth of the dark half of Śrāvaṇa. He was dark like the petal of a blue lotus. His eyes were large like lotus-leaves. He had four arms. His body was handsome. He was graced with divine ornaments. On his chest were Śrīvatsa and Kaustubha (marks). He was adorned with a garland of wood-flowers. This ancient Vāsudeva (i.e. Viṣṇu) was born of Vasudeva. Seeing Kṛṣṇa, the lord of the worlds, Vasudeva with his palms joined saluted him, full of the world, and said:

Vasudeva said:

39-41. O lord, O desire-yielding tree to the devotees, O lord of the world, you are born of me (i.e. as my son). You, the highest being, are the one without a beginning or an end among the gods. O you inconceivable one, you are a great son. You are thought of by the meditating saints and are ancient. O you sustainer of the earth, you have become my son on the earth. The sinful demons, seeing this your wonderful majestic form will not bear the great vigour, O highest being.

Rudra said:

42-55a. Thus requested by him the ancient Viṣṇu withdrew his form possessed of four arms. He shone as a human being only with two hands. All the demons, his bodyguards, that were there, were deluded by his Māyā, and were covered by mental darkness. In the meanwhile Vasudeva, praised by all gods, took the god, and quickly went from that city. The very strong king of serpents devoutly covered him with a thousand hoods, and accompanied him, when it was raining. At that time the town-gates were opened due to the touch of his feet. Being broken they were wide open; and those (people) that were there, became unconscious. That river Yamunā, that was full, flowed with her water knee-deep only, when the noble one entered her (water). Having crossed Yamunā, the best of the Yadus, being praised by gods, entered (Vraja—the station of cowherds) situated on her bank. There, that wife of Nanda, delivered in the auspicious cow-pen. She who was asleep was deluded by Māyā and covered with Tamas (darkness). That Yādava (i.e. Vasudeva) having placed on her bed the god (i.e. Kṛṣṇa), and taking that daughter again went (back) to Mathurā. Having given that daughter to his wife (Devakī), he remained well-composed. She who was on Devakī's bed, wept due to her being a child. Having heard the voice of the girl in the house, the bodyguards informed Kaṁsa of the auspicious delivery of Devakī. Kaṁsa quickly came there, and seized the girl, and then threw her on a stone. She too quickly went to the sky. Placing her foot on his head, she stood with her full face (visible). The goddess with eight arms said to the lord of demons:

The goddess said:

55b-56. O dull one, what is the use of having thrown me? He who will kill you, is born. He, who is the creator, the sustainer and the destroyer of the world is born in this world. He will snatch your life.

Rudra said:

57-58. Having spoken like this, the goddess filling the sky with her lustre, and being praised by gods and gandharvas, suddenly went to the Himālaya mountain. Then Kaṁsa, with his

mind dejected, and oppressed by fear, called his demons led by Pralamba, Cāṇūra, and said to them:

Kaṁsa said:

59-61. All hosts of gods, through our fear, have gone to the Milky Ocean, and have told everything about the destruction of the demons to Viṣṇu. Hearing their words, the supporter of the earth, the immutable one is born on the earth as a human being. So today, all you demons, taking any form as you desire, kill, without any fear children of excessive might.

Rudra said:

62-63. Having thus ordered (them), and having comforted and freed Vasudeva and Devakī, he entered his own house. Vasudeva then went to the excellent cow-pen (Vraja) of Nanda. Honoured by him, he gladly kept his son there. The descendant of Yadu said to Yaśodā, Nanda's wife:

Vasudeva said:

64. O honoured mother, protect as your own son, this son of mine, born from Rohiṇī's womb, who has come (i.e. been brought) here through fear of Kaṁsa.

Rudra said:

65-70. Nanda's delicate wife, of a firm vow, said, "All right". And having received a son of the pair, nourished him with joy. Having kept the sons in the house of the cowherd Nanda, Vasudeva being confident, went to Mathurā protected by Kaṁsa. Then on an auspicious day, Garga, impelled by Vasudeva, went to the cow-pen (Vraja) of the cowherd Nanda. The brāhmaṇa was honoured by the (people) residing there. Having duly performed their birth-rites in Gokula of the god, he gave divine names to Vasudeva's sons. The brāhmaṇa gave the elder one such names as Saṁkarṣaṇa, Rauhiṇeya, Balabhadra, Mahābala, Rāma. (He named) the younger one as Śrīdhara, Śrīkara, Śrīmat, Kṛṣṇa, Ananta, Jagatpati, Vāsudeva, Hṛṣīkeśa etc.

71-87. "In this world they will be known by the names Rāma, Kṛṣṇa." The best brāhmaṇa, having said so, and having worship-

ped the dead ancestors and deities, and being honoured by the cowherds again came (back) to Mathurā. At night Kaṁsa sent Pūtanā, the killer of children. She gave her breast smeared with poison to Kṛṣṇa of unlimited lustre (for being sucked by him). Knowing her to be a demoness, Kṛṣṇa the very lustrous, the best of the Yadus, drank (i.e. sucked) her breast deeply and profusely along with the life of the demoness. She with her body afflicted, and with her sinews suddenly cut off, fell down trembling and making a loud sound died. With her loud sound the sky was filled. Then all the cowherds seeing the demoness fallen on the ground, and Kṛṣṇa playing on her large breasts, were frightened. Being dejected, they quickly took the boy, and due to the fear of the demon, sprinkled with the cow's tail cowdung on his head. O you beautiful lady, the cowherd Nanda came and took the son. Having sprinkled (water) on all the limbs of his body to the accompaniment of (the utterance of) the names of the lord, put that wicked, fearful (demoness) out of Vraja. The group of cowherds who were frightened burnt her in that Vraja. Once Madhusūdana, Viṣṇu, lying under a cart, and having spread out his feet wept. With the stroke of his foot, he turned over the cart. With the pitchers and pots scattered about, it fell upside down. Then the cowherds and cowherdesses, seeing that great cart, were very much amazed, being apprehensive of what it was. The amazed Yaśodā quickly took the boy. Within just a short time only the two boys, the best Yadus, nourished with Yaśodā's milk, and growing, shone while crawling on their knees and hands. A fraudulent demon, disguised as a lad, set out to kill Kṛṣṇa, moved on the earth. Kṛṣṇa, knowing him to be a demon, struck him with his foot. In the form of the demon only he fell down and died. Then Kṛṣṇa roamed in the entire cowshed.

88-94. In every house of the cowherdesses, he took away butter. Then Yaśodā who was angry, tied him with a rope to a mortar and went to sell milk etc. Kṛṣṇa, the supporter of the earth, tied to the mortar with a rope, dragged it, and went between two arjuna trees. With the mortar Kṛṣṇa knocked down the two trees. With their trunks broken, they fell on the ground making a sound. Due to (i.e. on hearing) that loud sound, old, very vigorous cowherds went there, and seeing it were very much amazed. Yaśodā also being dejected freed the lord of the earth

and taking him who was amazed gave the noble one her breast (i.e. breast-fed him). Since the lord of the world was tied with a rope (dāmnā) by his mother, therefore, he was called, *Dāmodara* by all the great sages. The two arjuna trees reached the status of kinnaras.

95-100. Then all the old cowherds, led by the cowherd Nanda, regarding it to be a great portent, went to another place. In the charming Vṛndāvana on the auspicious bank of Yamunā, they made an abode for the cows and the cowherdesses. Then the growing, very strong Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by keepers of calves, looked after the calves. A great demon, named Baka, endeavoured in the form of a crane to kill Kṛṣṇa, the best of the Yadus, who was with the cows and the calves. Seeing him, Viṣṇu also easily raised a clod and struck on his wing. The great demon fell on the earth. Then after a few days, he, looking after the cows and calves in the forest, slept on the earth on sprouts under the shade of a jambū tree.

101-107. In the meanwhile god Brahmā surrounded by hosts of gods came to see Kṛṣṇa, and seeing the two best Yadus (i.e. Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa) asleep, snatched the calves and the children of the cowherds, and again went (back) to heaven. When they got up they saw that the children and the calves were lost. They were amazed as to where the cows, calves, and children of the cowherds had gone. Knowing that it was the act done by the Creator, Kṛṣṇa, the ancient one, created the children, the cows and the calves just like that. Madhusūdana, the protector and the lord of the worlds, quickly created the calves and the cowherds of the same form. In the evening the cows—the mothers—seeing their own calves having come (back) behaved as before. When thus the period of a year was passed by the noble one, the creator again gave him (back) the calves and the children. Brahmā, the lord of the three worlds, with his palms joined, taking himself round and saluting Govinda, spoke through fear:

Brahmā said:

108-113. Salutation to you, the soul of all; to you of the nature of true knowledge, of the nature of eternal joy; to the noble one, of a loving soul. You are minute, are of a big, gross

form. You are omnipresent, immutable. O you, the beginning, the middle and the end, salutation to you. Salutation to you of eternal knowledge, power and supremacy; to you full of valour and lustre; to you, O you of a great power; to you of the form of six qualities. O brahman, you are the Supreme Being (described) of the Vedas; you are the great Puruṣa; you are the embodied Supreme Being; you are the Supreme Being of the sacred texts. You are the four (great) men; you are the best ancient man. O Brahman, the earth, fire, air are your powers. Due to your words the earth and fire sprang up, O lord of the world. With your life, O lord, the atmosphere and air were created.

114-118. O you immutable one, in the same way, from your eyes were created the sky and the sun; and O sinless one, from your ears were created the quarters and the moon. From your mind, O great god, were created the flow of water and Varuṇa. That Brahman which is manifested in the Mīmāṁsā that is proclaimed, is also (manifested) in sacrifices or in a great vow, in the hymns that are sung, in the sky, in the heaven. It is also the air. It is also in the sky, so also in the herbs. It is also in the stars, all planets, and the sun also. In the same wayit is in the beings. The holy texts call it 'Brahman'. That also is the highest Brahman, well known and immortal all round.

119-122. *Hiraṇmaya*, *Avyaya* (Immutable), *Yajña*, *Śuci* (Pure), *Śucipād* (of pure feet)—these are his epithets in the Vedas. Nowhere is his (likeness found). The holy text describes him as *Cakṣurmaya* (consisting of eyes), *Śrotramaya* (consisting of ears), *Chandomaya* (consisting of Vedas), *Manomaya* (consisting of mind), *Vāṅmaya* (consisting of speech), the highest soul, the highest god. O you lotus-eyed one, thus you are the (sole) aim of the Upaniṣads. This one is not able to praise you, who has mastered the entire Vedānta. It was a great offence that I snatched your calves. O you who are affectionate to those who seek your shelter, forgive me.

Maheśvara said:

123-130. The Creator, having thus praised Viṣṇu, and having repeatedly saluted him, gave him (back) the calves, and went home. He, delighted, nourished, and practising severe penance, always keeping in his mind Viṣṇu in the form of a

child, lived with the gods, O goddess. Kṛṣṇa created the calves and children as before. They became one with him, when the gods were observing (i.e. in the presence of gods). With the keepers of the calves Kṛṣṇa went to Nandagokula. Then after a few days the best of Yadus, Acyuta, Madhusūdana, went with the cowherds to the pool of Yamunā, and there having injured easily with his one foot the thousand hoods of the very strong serpent, made him face the risk to his life. That Kāliya, regaining consciousness, sought his shelter. Then revered Kṛṣṇa protected the serpent who had given up his poison. Having made marks with his foot on the hoods of him who was afraid of Garuḍa, the best of the Yadus banished him from the pool of Yamunā.

131-137. Then that Kāliya, along with his sons and wife, quickly left that pool. Having saluted Govinda he went (elsewhere). The trees on the bank that were formerly scorched by (Kāliya's) poison, on being seen by Kṛṣṇa quickly bore flowers and fruits. Madhusūdana, the lord, full of all gods, after having attained youth in (due) time, looked after the herd of cows. The best Yadu, with cowherds of his age and with Balarāma, moved in the charming Vṛndāvana. There having killed a very fierce demon of a huge body and of the form of a serpent and as big as Meru and Mandāra (mountains), he reached the forest of Dhenuka having the arbours of palm trees like tāla and hintāla; he entered that charming forest, full of fruits and having arbours of palm trees, and having lifted Dhenuka, of the size of a mountain, and always having the form of an ass (or a cruel form), by seizing his feet, he struck him against a palm tree. At that moment only his keepers rejoiced near him.

138-143. Quickly moving out from that forest they came to the Bhāṇḍīra forest. There they played children's sports with Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. A demon named Pralamba came there in the guise of a cowherd. Putting Rāma on his back he quickly went to the sky. Knowing him to be a demon Rāma angrily struck his head with his fist; then he, with his body afflicted, fell (down). Roaring with a loud voice in his demonish form only, he, with his head and body broken, and smeared with blood, died. Then Nanda's son (Kṛṣṇa) remained, in the evening, in Govraja (cow-pen), with the young cowherdesses, sporting in

Kaumodavarcasa. The best demon Ariṣṭa went there in the form of a bull; as he had come to kill Kṛṣṇa, he roared loudly.

144-149. Seeing him, all cowherds, oppressed by fear, ran away. Kṛṣṇa too, seeing the chief of demons to have come, uprooted a palm tree and hurt him with it between his horns. He, with his head and horns broken, and vomiting profuse blood, died while roaring. Thus having killed Ariṣṭa, the chief demon of a huge body, he called the young cowherds, and lived there only in Govraja (cow-pen). Then after a few days a great demon named Keśin came to Vraja taking up the body of a horse, to kill Govinda. Having gone to that charming Govraja, he neighed loudly. Due to that neighing all the three worlds were filled. All the hosts of gods, thinking it to be the end of the age, were frightened.

150-154. All the cowherds and cowherdesses living there were confounded and disturbed. Coming to senses they all ran on all sides. Saying "Protect (us)", the cowherdesses sought Kṛṣṇa's shelter. He who loved his devotees, said, "Do not be afraid, do not be afraid." Then he, the younger brother of Indra, having comforted them, easily and quickly struck with his fist on the head of the demon. With his teeth and eyes broken, he roared very loudly. He (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) lifting a great rock, dropped it on his body. The great demon with his entire body crushed, and roaring with a fierce sound, suddenly dropped on the ground and died.

155-156. Seeing Keśin killed, the hosts of gods in heaven profusely dropped showers of flowers and said, "Well (done), well (done)." Viṣṇu (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) having thus killed in his childhood very powerful demons, just happily rejoiced with Balarāma.

157-162. He was dark like the petals of a blue lotus. His eyes resembled lotus-petals. He wore a yellow garment. He had put on a garland. He was graced with a garland of wood-flowers. His chest shone with the Kaustubha (gem). He had a chaplet on his head, and smearing (of sandal etc.). He was (adorned) with lovely ornaments. He was graced with earrings. He had worn a tulasī-garland. He had put on the mark of musk. His very glossy, dark, curly hair was tied into a braid. He had the head ornaments of a peacock's plumage with various kinds of

flowers tied; the palms of his hands, the soles of his feet and his lips resembled red lotus. Between the sides (shone) his face with the eyebrows resembling the spot on the moon. He shone with necklaces, anklets, armlets and bracelets. The descendant of Yadu, sweetly playing upon the flute remained in the very charming Vṛndāvana, graced with fruits and flowers.

163-167. Seeing Viṣṇu who had despised the beauty of crores of Cupids, all the cowherdesses were tormented by Cupid's missile. Formerly all sages living in Daṇḍaka forest, seeing Rāma desired to enjoy Rāma of a beautiful body. All of them, turned into women, were born in Gokula. Having approached Viṣṇu with love, they were then freed from the ocean of the mundane existence. Since the demons angrily came to Kṛṣṇa, and met with death in the battle, they after being killed, obtained liberation. In the world lust and anger of people are the cause of (their falling into) hell. The cowherdesses, haters of gods (in their former existence), having devoutly approached him, were liberated.

168-173. Those who betake themselves to Viṣṇu (even) through lust, fear or hatred reach Vaikuṇṭha. Then what to say of those who do so through devotion! Having heard the sound of his flute at night the wives of the cowherds all got up from their beds with their garments and hair dishevelled. Tormented by Cupid's arrows, they left their husbands, sons, relatives, so also sense of shame and their own family; they came to the lord of the world. All the cowherdesses, having approached Govinda, embraced him with their arms, and enjoyed (i.e. kissed) his lower lip as the gods enjoy nectar. With all those, the lord of the self sported in Govraja. All those fearless women also sported with him in Vraja. Thus day after day they sported with Keśava in the charming Vṛndāvana and the bank of Yamunā.

Pārvatī said:

174. How would he, Janārdana, who had descended on the earth for the protection of Dharma, approach others' wives?

Rudra said:

175-177. O you of an auspicious face, he does not differ-

entiate between his own body and those of others. The entire world is his body. There is nothing different from it. Due to his naturally being the lord, the master of the soul and the lord of the world, the noble one does not recognise the difference between a male and a female. So also due to his power of removing sins the (all-) pervading lord, the highest soul, the god, is not at a fault, O fortunate one.

Vasiṣṭha said:

178. Having thus spoken to Pārvatī, Rudra, the destroyer of Śrī Tripura, commenced telling the whole life of Kṛṣṇa.

Rudra said:

179-183. When autumn arrived, the cowherds led by the cowherd Nanda started celebrating the festival of the lord of gods (i.e. Indra). But Kṛṣṇa stopped that festival of Indra, and he, the powerful one, got celebrated the festival of Govardhana, the lord of mountains. Then the angry Indra, continuously poured down very heavy showers for seven nights in Govraja of Nanda. Kṛṣṇa, having uprooted the great mountain Govardhana, easily held it for the protection of the cows. O you of a good vow, having got the protection of the mountain, the cowherds and cowherdesses lived happily only as if they were in a mansion.

184-186. Then the thousand-eyed Indra who was afraid, with his mind confounded, stopped that shower, and went to that Vraja of Nanda. Kṛṣṇa too put the great mountain as before. All those old cowherds, led by the cowherd Nanda, worshipped Govinda (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) and were very much amazed. Then god Indra, having approached Kṛṣṇa, with his palms joined praised him with a voice faltering due to joy.

Indra said:

187-195. O lotus-eyed one, O omniscient one, O superior Viṣṇu, salutation to you. I salute you, O you who are beyond the three constituent qualities (of sattva, rajas and tamas), O lord of all, and the soul of the universe. You yourself are the sacrifice, the formula used on making an oblation to a deity; you are Oṁkāra, sacrifice (or power), oblation. O Keśava, you

are the father and the mother of all gods. Before the creation you, Hiraṇya garbha, existed. You alone are the lord, the Supreme Being, the Brahman. O god, you alone have supported this earth and heaven. O lord of the world, you thus give yourself (to your devotees) and give fruits (of devotion). O you, the lord of the worlds, gods have obtained light. O ancient one, your shadow is nectar as well as death. To that god, to you, we offer an oblation. From him these golden ones have come up. O Keśava, of him the oceans and the earth are the carrier. O you immutable one, these directions, intermediate directions and the air (Vāyu) belong to you. To that god, to you, who growing (in size) again got on the earth, we offer an oblation. O Brahman, O great lord, you supported heaven. In the atmosphere you remain in a mote of the sun-beam. You are omnipresent and immutable.

196-204. To that god we offer our oblation, to whom, shining, of a hot lustre and full of qualities, you cry.* Śrī would always necessarily see him mentally. In the highest place (i.e. in him) the sun, that has risen, shines. To you, that god, we offer an oblation. Your great water conceiving at the time of creation create the streams of water. Who, the immutable lord of gods (but you) stood before the demon? To you, that god, we offer our oblation. The water saw Dakṣa Prajāpati. Having a sacrifice they first produce the oblation. You are, among the gods, the superior god, the greatest of the great. To you, that god, we offer an oblation. You the immutable Man, the creator of the world, (please) do not harm us. He, the lord, of a pious act, created heaven. He created the moon, profuse water and the entire world. To you, that god, we offer our oblation. O lord, all these created objects have been around you.

205-211. O lord, beings have sprung from you. You are Acyuta. The future and the past are due to you. Let that, desiring which we offer a sacrifice, come to us wholly. Due to your kind gaze, may we be the lords of the three (worlds). You are the Supreme Being called Hiraṇmaya, having golden beard and moustache. From the point of the nail everything is gold. The sun shares gold. This is omnipresent Brahman that has settled as

*Vv. 196, 198, 199, 200, 201 etc. are not clear.

the sun. That is the excellent, best lustre of god Savitṛ. May we always think of the form of you who always illumine our minds. O you lotus-eyed one, O you lord of Śrī, O you lord of all, O Keśava, salutation to you. O you fit to be known through Vedānta, O lord of sacrifices, O you of the form of sacrifice, salutation to you. Salutation to you, to Vāsudeva, dressed as a cowherd. I have offended (you) by destroying all that. Forgive it, O lord of the world, O you ocean of compassion, O Supreme Being. In a short time kill Kaṁsa who is unassailable. Having done good to the gods, live in happiness, settling on the earth.

Mahādeva said:

212-221. Indra, the lord of all gods, having thus praised Kṛṣṇa, crowned him with nectar and divine garments and ornaments. Having worshipped the lord of gods, he went (back) to heaven. The old cowherds and cowherdesses saw Indra there. And being honoured by him, they were very much delighted. The very brave Rāma and Kṛṣṇa adorned with divine ornaments, remained happily in Nanda's Govraja. O goddess, in the meanwhile, the best sage Nārada suddenly went to Mathurā, and entered Kaṁsa's vicinity. Being honoured by the king there, he was seated on an auspicious seat. He informed him of the acts of Viṣṇu, the active exertion of the deities and the birth of Viṣṇu (as Kṛṣṇa). So also (he told him about) Vasudeva's having put his son in Vraja, the death of the demons, and the expulsion of the king of the serpents; so also about (Kṛṣṇa's) holding up the best mountain (i.e. Govardhana) and the meeting with Indra. Having told Kaṁsa everything fully he, honoured by the demon, went to Brahmā's abode. Kaṁsa, with his mind dejected and surrounded by his ministers, deliberated with them about his death. There the very powerful lord of demons, Kaṁsa, told about the mission for his good to Akrūra, the best among the intelligent ones and loving Dharma.

Kaṁsa said:

222-228. Due to my fear all gods led by Indra, overcome by fear, approached Viṣṇu and sought his shelter. He, Madhusūdana, the revered creator of the beings, granted them exemption from fear and was born from Devakī's womb. The

wicked-hearted Vasudeva also deceived me and at night he, the very wicked one, put his son in Nanda's house. Even as a child he killed the unassailable great demons. There is no doubt that he is also ready to kill me. But even gods and demons along with Indra cannot kill him. So having brought him here, I must kill him with (some) stratagem. Through intoxicated elephants, wrestlers, or excellent horses—with this or that means he can be killed here. Therefore, O best of the Yadus, having gone to Govraja, fetch here to enjoy the ceremony of arrows, Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, so also all old cowherds led by Nanda, O descendant of Yadu.

Mahādeva said:

229-242. Saying "All right", the best of the Yadus, the powerful one, eager to see Kṛṣṇa, got into a chariot and went to the charming Gokula. Akrūra, the best among the great devotees of Viṣṇu possessed of politeness, saw the unafflicted Kṛṣṇa settled among the cows. (He was) like a dark cloud; (he was) adorned with all ornaments; his eyes (were large) like lotus-leaves; (he had) long arms, and (was) healthy. (He had) covered himself with a yellow garment; (he was) handsome in all limbs; (his) chest (was) shining with the Kaustubha; (he was) graced with jewelled earrings. (He possessed) the garland of tulasī (-leaves) and wood-flowers; (he had put on) ear-ornaments of wood-flowers. Seeing Kṛṣṇa surrounded by young cowherdesses, he, the descendant of Yadu, with his entire body horripilated and his eyes full of tears of joy, got down from the chariot and saluted him. Joyfully approaching Kṛṣṇa, taking himself round him, and saluting him, he put on his head (Kṛṣṇa's) feet resembling red lotuses and marked with the signs of Vajra, and repeatedly saluted him. That descendant of Yadu then saw Balarāma resembling the full autumnal moon and decorated with pearl-necklaces, and saluted him. The two heroes, best of the Yadus, raised him with joy, and having embraced him, came home with that Akrūra, a descendant of Vṛṣṇi. The cowherd Nanda, of a great lustre, seeing the best of the Yadus to have arrived (there), approached him, and having seated him on an excellent seat, gladly, duly and devoutly honoured him with materials of worship, water for washing his feet, divine garments

and adorations. Akrūra, a descendant of Yadu, gave garments and ornaments to Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, to the cowherd Nanda, and to Yaśodā. The intelligent one seated on a kuśa-seat asked the cool one about his well-being, and asked about all the stateaffairs, said to him:

Akrūra said:

243-251. This Kṛṣṇa of great lustre, actually the immutable Viṣṇu, requested by the hosts of gods and magnanimous sages for the good of the deities and the protection of the good, so also for the destruction of those who were a burden to the earth, and for establishing righteousness, was born in (i.e. from) the belly (i.e. womb) of Devakī at midnight in rainy season. Through Kaṁsa's fear Vasudeva brought the lord of gods, Viṣṇu, his son, and put him in your house in that night. At that time only, the glorious Yaśodā gave birth to a daughter of an auspicious face born from a portion of Māyā (of the lord). She had deluded this entire auspicious Vraja. (Vasudeva) having put the best Yadu (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) on the bed of unconscious Yaśodā took the daughter and went home. Having put her on Devakī's bed, he came out. She (i.e. the daughter), remaining in Devakī's bed then quickly cried. O you of a good vow, having heard it (i.e. her crying), Kaṁsa suddenly took the girl and the powerful one, having whirled her, dropped her on a stone. That girl, (then) got up; and she having eight hands and weapons, and remaining in the sky, angrily spoke to Kaṁsa in a grave voice:

The girl said:

252. O you mean demon, he who is the Supreme Being, the lord of all gods, the eternal one, has gone to Vraja (is born) to kill you.

Akrūra said:

253-261. Speaking like this that Mahāmayā (the Great Illusion) went to the Himālaya (mountain). Since then the wicked one, with his mind dejected through fear, sent demons to kill the noble (Kṛṣṇa). This intelligent boy alone easily killed them all. The highest god performed very wonderful acts. Having heard about (these acts like) holding the Govardhana (mountain),

expulsion of the king of serpents, meeting with Indra, death of all demons, which were told to him by the divine sage (Nārada), he, tormented by fear is eager to take from here the unassailable Rāma and Kṛṣṇa of mighty arms and to get them killed by intoxicated great elephants or by wrestlers. He has sent me here to fetch Kṛṣṇa. The wicked one has imprisoned Vasudeva. (I have) told you all these acts of that very wicked one. To enjoy the ceremony of arrows all you cowherds, inhabitants of Vraja please go tomorrow, taking with you curd, ghee etc., and with Rāma and Kṛṣṇa to him. There is no doubt that Kaṁsa will be killed by Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, giving up your fear go (to Mathurā) by the order of the king.

The lord said:

262-272. Speaking like this, that very intelligent Akrūra became silent. Hearing those fierce and awe-inspiring words of him all old cowherds led by the cowherd Nanda, stupefied by grief, were in an indescribable ocean of sorrow. Seeing them (like that) the lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa cheered them. The powerful one said: "Do not entertain any fear from the demon. Accompanied by Rāma and you, I shall go to Mathurā to destroy this wicked Kaṁsa. Having killed there that wicked Kaṁsa, the chief of demons, so also having killed all demons, I shall protect the earth. Therefore, giving up your grief, go to Mathurā." The cowherds led by the cowherd Nanda, who were thus addressed by Kṛṣṇa, repeatedly embraced him, and smelt his head. Having thought over the immeasurable acts of the very noble one, and on Akrūra's words, all the cowherds, were free from affliction. Yaśodā gave Akrūra many pure cooked foods—tasty, savoury, and sweet—so also sumptuous, agreeable meals. The best of the Yadus (i.e. Akrūra) enjoyed, along with Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, the best cowherds like Nanda, so also the young and the old people, the food given by Yaśodā, which was tasteful, removed foulness, diseases, which was good, in her (house) that was well decorated.

273-279. Having properly fed them and having given them water to rinse their mouths with, she of a firm vow, gave him a tāmbūla with camphor. When the sun had set, the Yādava, having offered the evening prayer, and having, along with Rāma

and Kṛṣṇa, enjoyed the excellent food of sweetened milk, went to sleep with them. Kṛṣṇa slept as Viṣṇu on the Śeṣa, in that best mansion that was charming, illumined with lamps, beautiful, that had lovely beds, and that was graced with various flowers. Seeing him, the excellent bliss, Akrūra, marked with tears of joy and horripilation, gave up his sleep of ignorance, and the best devotee of Viṣṇu shampooed the feet of Viṣṇu (i.e. Kṛṣṇa). "By (doing) this much my life is fruitful; I have lived well. This is the prosperity in the three worlds; this is the best happiness, this is the righteous kingdom; this is the best joy of liberation.

280-284. It is not possible to recollect it mentally by deities like Śiva, Brahmā, best sages like Sanaka, and great sages like Vasiṣṭha. That couple of feet of the lord of Śrī, bright like the autumnal lotuses, and touched by Indirā, Lakṣmī with her hands, gives great pleasure. Fortunately I have secured this auspicious lotus-like couple of feet of Viṣṇu." Due to that great joy of (having secured) Brahman, the night passed as a moment. Then when the morning dawned Viṣṇu, being praised in heaven by the best hosts of gods, got up from the bed. Having properly rinsed his mouth, the intelligent one, along with Rāma, fell at the feet of his mother and made the departure agreeable.

285-287. Having raised them, Yaśodā, full of grief and joy, and with her face full of tears, affectionately embraced her sons. The respectable lady of a firm vow conferred a blessing (on them) and after repeatedly embracing the great heroes, she allowed them to go. Akrūra also saluted Yaśodā and with his palms joined, said:

Akrūra said:

288-289. O glorious one, I shall (now) leave. O sinless one, favour me. This Kṛṣṇa of great arms will, after killing the very powerful Kaṁsa, be the king of the entire world. There is no doubt about it. Therefore, O you of an excellent face, give up sorrow and be happy.

The lord said:

290-297. Thus addressed she allowed Akrūra, the best of Yadus, to go. With Rāma and Kṛṣṇa he got into an excellent chariot. Being praised by groups of celestial nymphs he quickly

went to Mathurā. All old cowherds led by the cowherd Nanda, followed him. Seeing that Kṛṣṇa going the cowherdesses again took curd, ghee, various fruits, and followed Kṛṣṇa going out, seated in a chariot. Kṛṣṇa sent back all the cowherdesses. With their minds tormented by grief, they wept for the lotus-eyed one. They repeatedly wept saying, "O Kṛṣṇa, O Kṛṣṇa, O Kṛṣṇa, O Govinda." The helpless ones with their eyes full of tears, remained there weeping. Then Akrūra, the Yādava, along with Rāma and Kṛṣṇa drove that chariot from Govraja to Mathurā. Having quickly crossed Yamunā, and having placed the excellent chariot on the bank, having got down from the divine chariot, he set about to bathe there. Then to do the necessary (rites) he plunged in the auspicious water.

298-304. Muttering the expiatory hymn the best devotee of Viṣṇu saw in the water the bright Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. He saw Rāma like a crore of autumnal moons, the lord wearing a dark garment, with his body smeared with divine sandal, and having beauty due to ornaments of pearls, having eyes like red lotuses, and having ear-ornaments of white lotuses; and saw Kṛṣṇa like a dark cloud and wearing a divine yellow garment, having large lotus-like eyes with his body smeared with yellow sandal, and graced with various gems. Seeing (them) there the best Yadu was very much amazed. Getting up he saw the two very mighty ones in the chariot. Again plunging (in the water) and muttering the couple of hymns, he saw Viṣṇu in the ocean of nectar along with Lakṣmī being praised by Sanaka and others and waited upon by all gods. Seeing the god in the water there, he was highly amazed. The best of the Yadus praised the omnipresent god Viṣṇu.

Akrūra said:

305-315. Salutation to you of the nature of Kāla (time or death), to you without a beginning or an end; salutation to you who are unmanifest and unchanging. Salutation to you, the lord of beings; repeated salutations to you, O best being. Salutation to you, the controller of all beings and the highest soul. Salutation to you, the changing and the unchanging, the actual Highest Being; to the lord of qualities and to the restraining (one). Salutation to you who are without such differences as of place and time. Salutation to you, the endless one, and

the unfalling one. Salutation to you, to Govinda, to the lord of the three (Vedas), to the holder of the Śārṅga bow, to Nārāyaṇa, Viśva and Vāsudeva. Salutation to you, to Viṣṇu, of many forms; repeated salutation to you, the eternal one; to you, having lotus-like eyes, to the eternal one, to the holder of the conch and the disc. Repeated salutations to you whose brilliance is graced with ornaments resembling crores of rising suns; to Hari; to the lord of all worlds. Salutations to Savitṛ (the generator), to the seed of the worlds, to the highest soul, to Saṁkarṣaṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Pradyumna. Salutation to you, Aniruddha, the supporter, the creator, the origin of everything, having a thousand forms, and having many heads, feet and hands. Salutation to you, having a thousand names, to the eternal one, to the Highest Being. Salutation to you shining on the bed of the serpent, to you of a pleasing form. Salutation to you, to Keśava, having put on a yellow garment, having a bright lustre while pressing in embrace the hard breasts of Lakṣmī, to you Śrīdhara, to the lord of Śrī, and to you having innumerable forms.

The lord said:

316-319. A man who at the time of bathing, meditating upon the ancient god, devoutly recites this hymn, is free from all sins. Having got the fruit of (visiting) all holy places, he would secure absorption in Viṣṇu. That best devotee of Viṣṇu thus praised the god (while remaining) in water and he, Akrūra, worshipped him with water and fragrant flowers. Being blessed, Akrūra then came out of the water of Yamunā and full of auspiciousness approached and saluted Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. Seeing him polite and amazed, Viṣṇu said to him:

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

320a. O Yādava, what wonder did you see in the water?

The lord said:

320b. Akrūra spoke to the greatest of the Yadus, Kṛṣṇa, of great lustre:

321-326. "What wonder is there, O lord, of the greatness of you, the omnipresent lord of the world? O Hṛṣīkeśa, you yourself are the entire world. You are the water, the sky, the fire, the earth

and the wind. You are this entire world of four kinds, the immobile and the mobile. O Vāsudeva, there is none other than you, as water from cloud only. You are the sacrifice, you are the exclamation on offering an oblation to a deity; you are the Oṁkāra; you are the oblation also. O lord of gods, you have taken up the form to protect righteousness. You obtained the grandeur (of the forms) of the Fish, the Tortoise, the Boar. O lord, you alone protect this entire world, full of you."

The lord said:

327-330. Having thus praised Govinda, and having saluted him, the best of the Yadus got into the divine chariot along with them. Then having quickly reached Mathurā created by gods, he, having kept Rāma and Kṛṣṇa at the city-gate, went into the harem. Then having informed the king of their arrival, he, honoured by the king, entered his own house. Then in the evening Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, holding each other's hands went into Mathurā.

331-335. The two very powerful, noble, best Yadus, while passing along the royal path, saw a washerman dyeing garments. Kṛṣṇa, the powerful one, along with Rāma, seeing him wearing divine garments and coming to the palace, asked for those garments. The washerman did not give them to him, and remaining there on the path spoke to him many caustic words. With the palm of his hand only Kṛṣṇa beat him. On the way itself, he, vomiting much blood, was struck down. Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, the two heroes, along with their relatives, put on those charming garments.

336-342a. The two best Yadus reached the house of a garland-maker. Seeing them he honoured them with fragrant flowers. Being delighted, the two best Yadus granted him his desired boon. Then they came to the path. There they saw a humpbacked lady of a happy face, whose body and back were crooked, and who had held a pot containing sandal. Seeing her they asked for the sandal. She, smiling, gave them excellent sandal. They took that divine sandal, and smeared (their bodies) as they liked. Giving her a beautiful form, they came to the path. Being observed by ladies, the two delicate noble ones of charming faces entered the sacrificial chamber with their followers. Keśava, Madhusūdana, seeing there a decorated, divine bow, easily took it and broke it.

342b-343. Kaṁsa, the chief of demons, seeing that bow being broken, was very much perturbed, called the principal, pre-eminent wrestlers and charioteers, and having deliberated with his ministers said to Cāṇūra:

Kaṁsa said:

344-345. Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, the destroyers of all demons, have come. In the morning kill them in wrestling without hesitation. With this or that means the two, proud of their strength, should be killed with endeavour by intoxicated elephants or chief wrestlers.

The lord said:

346-350. Having directed like this, the king with his younger brother and ministers, mounted, through fear, on the top of his divine palace. He put at all gates and on all paths intoxicated elephants. Everywhere he put wrestlers and intoxicated elephants. Knowing all that the intelligent Kṛṣṇa also, along with Rāma, stayed, with his followers, in the sacrificial chamber in the night. When at the end of the night, the day broke, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa got up from the bed, offered water, were well adorned, and having eaten (something) were eager and ready to fight. They went out of the house as two lions from a cave.

351-354. Kṛṣṇa saw at the gate of Kaṁsa's palace his elephant named Kuvalayāpīḍa who resembled the peak of the Himālaya mountain, bestowed prosperity on Kaṁsa, removed the pride of the elephant of god (Indra), whose body was huge, who was intoxicated. Seeing that great elephant, Kṛṣṇa the supporter of the earth, held his trunk with his hand, and jumping properly, easily whirled him round and threw him on the ground. That great elephant, with his entire body crushed, and crying with a fierce sound, suddenly fell on the ground, and died.

355-361. Having killed him, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa drew out his tusks, seized them and then entered the arena to fight with the wrestlers. The demons that were there, on seeing the valour of Kṛṣṇa were frightened; they fled and came to the harem. Having very securely closed the doors they remained there in thousands. Seeing the doors firmly closed, the mighty Kṛṣṇa easily struck them with his foot and caused them to fall down. The two

being broken were knocked down. The army and the troop were arranged. All remaining there were killed with bodies and necks crushed. O you noble one, then the two very strong, magnanimous fleshy ones, eager to fight, whirling the tusks, saw the wrestlers, Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika. Kaṁsa also, seeing the very strong Kṛṣṇa and Rāma, was frightened, and then said to his best wrestler, Cāṇūra:

Kaṁsa said:

362. O wrestler, kill the two young cowherds at this time (i.e. now). Dividing my kingdom I shall readily give you half of it.

The lord said:

363-370. At that time Kṛṣṇa appeared to be great to the wrestlers, like another great Meru mountain in the house and the battle. He, Acyuta, was another fire of destruction in the eyes of Kaṁsa. To women he actually appeared like Cupid, and to his parents like a child. He appeared like Viṣṇu to the gods, and to cowherds like their friend. They there saw the omnipresent Viṣṇu in many forms. Vasudeva, Akrūra, so also the very intelligent cowherd Nanda climbed upon another palace, and saw the great destruction. Devakī, along with ladies staying in the harem, remained there; and all the auspicious ones with their eyes full of tears saw the boy's face. The queen consoled by them entered the house. Then all the hosts of gods, seated in aeroplanes in the sky, praised the lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa with shouts of victory. The gods, and hosts of Maruts loudly said, "Kill Kaṁsa." In the meanwhile, when the musical instruments were sounded, the very strong, best Yadus attacked the two great wrestlers.

371-376. The magnanimous ones, resembling dark and white mountains fought with them—Kṛṣṇa with Cāṇūra, and Balarāma with Muṣṭika. Due to the fight between the wrestlers, so also to (strokes of) fists and kicks, there was a great havoc, causing fear (even) to gods. Kṛṣṇa, having sported with Cāṇūra for a long time, having crushed the body of the wrestler, easily knocked him down. That great wrestler who caused great unhappiness to gods and demons, vomiting profuse blood, fell on the ground and died. Similarly Rāma fought with Muṣṭika for a

long time. The powerful one struck him on his chest with fists. With his bones and sinews broken he fell on the ground. Then all the wrestlers seeing the valour (of Balarāma) ran away.

377-387. Kaṁsa suffering from agony, was very much frightened. In the meanwhile the invincible, magnanimous heroes, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa got upon the high palatial seat. Kṛṣṇa, Hari, striking with one foot Kaṁsa on his head knocked him down on the ground from the top of the palace. He, with all his limbs broken, (fell) dead on the ground. When Kṛṣṇa had killed Kaṁsa, very strong Rāma also struck his (Kaṁsa's) younger brother Sunāman with the fist only. The supporter of the earth (i.e. Balarāma) knocked him down on the ground. Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, having killed the wicked Kaṁsa along with his younger brother, approached their parents, and saluted them devoutly. Devakī and Vasudeva repeatedly embraced them and longing for sons, smelled the two affectionately on their heads. Over them the breasts of Devakī showered milk. Then having cheered up their parents, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa went out. O goddess, in the meanwhile divine drums were beaten, and the chief gods dropped showers of flowers. The divine hosts of gods having praised and saluted Kṛṣṇa, and being very highly pleased, went to their respective worlds. Kṛṣṇa, the pious one, along with Rāma saluted the cowherd Nanda and the old cowherds, and joyfully embraced them. He gladly gave them wealth with many gems.

388-392. Kṛṣṇa honoured all those old cowherds with garments, ornaments etc. and with much wealth and corn. Dismissed by that Kṛṣṇa, they, led by the cowherd Nanda, and full of joy and sorrow, went to the divine Vraja. Having approached their maternal grandfather, the invincible Rāma and Kṛṣṇa freed him from imprisonment, and having repeatedly consoled him, Kṛṣṇa consecrated him on the kingdom (i.e. as the king). Through best brāhmaṇas he got performed the obsequies of Kaṁsa. Having installed the chief Yadus like Akrūra on the kingdom (i.e. as kings) he made Ugrasena the (chief) king, and Kṛṣṇa, Vasudeva's pious son, ruled the kingdom righteously.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The purest gems lie hidden in the bottom of the ocean or in the depth of rocks. One has to dive into the ocean or delve into the rocks to find them out. Similarly, truth lies concealed in the language which with the passage of time has become obsolete. Man has to learn that language before he discovers that truth.

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EDITORIAL

With the publication of this volume the translation of the *Padma-Purāṇa* is now complete. This Part of the Purāṇa comprises the concluding chapters 246-255 of Section VI: *Uttarakhaṇḍa* and chapters 1-26 of the last, Section VII: *Kriyāyogasārakhaṇḍa* plus Index to the whole of the Purāṇa.

The chapters of Section VI included here describe some important events of the life of Śrīkṛṣṇa from Jarāsandha's invasion of Mathurā to the wholesale destruction of the descendants of Yadu in a terrible in-fighting and the sad end of the golden era of Kṛṣṇa. The last Section deals mainly with the details of and the rites and rituals connected with the worship of god Viṣṇu as well as the formalities of the Vaiṣṇava sect. Some interesting features and events we note here in passing.

The founding of the city of Dvārakā by Śrīkṛṣṇa in the sea and its final submergence are allegorically described in chapter 246 of Section VI. Archaeologists have recently unearthed important evidence in this regard which supports the real existence of this city in the remote past. It was to save the population of Mathurā threatened by Kālayavana, a powerful and cruel ally of Jarāsandha, the father-in-law of Kaṁsa, that the city of Dvārakā was built by Śrīkṛṣṇa, where the citizens of Mathurā were shifted in a hurry. Kālayavana is described as a Mleccha king with a huge army of ferocious barbarians approached by Jarāsandha to come to his help when his own army was routed and destroyed by Śrīkṛṣṇa and Balarāma. The word *Kālayavana* means a "black Greek or foreigner". He might have been a cruel invader from the Middle East or Africa. We could as well venture a guess that he might have been one from a Muslim country during the time when the Purāṇas were composed as the total shift of a population implies a fear of general massacre and looting for which the Muslim invaders were notorious.

In Section VI, chapter 249 Kṛṣṇa's eight wives are listed as

Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāmā, Kālindī, Mitravindā, Jāmbavatī, Nāgnajiti, Sulakṣmaṇā and Suśīlā. In addition he had to accommodate in his harem sixteen thousand maidens who were held in captivity by the demon Naraka who had terrorized the world and was killed by Kṛṣṇa. This huge number of females in Śrīkṛṣṇa's harem resulted in an abnormal proliferation of Yādava population in the city of Dvārakā, in which in course of time evil practices, such as drinking, set in and ultimately the whole of which was destroyed in a drunken feud. This series of sad events is described in chapter 252, Section VI. One noteworthy thing here is that the wives of Yādavas committed *Sati* after the destruction, showing a prevalance of this practice, if not in those remote times, at least at the time when the Purāṇas and the Epics were composed.

The Purāṇa condemns those who worship demons, vampires, spirits, ghosts, Bhairavas, Yakṣas and even deities enjoying liquor and flesh. Worship of these was current in pre-Aryan societies and later also under the influence of Tantric ideas.

Recent ecological concern and mobilization of public opinion against pollution are fore-hadowed in this Purāṇa when it declares that "there is no expiation for one who urinates or excretes on the bank of Gaṅgā and he would go to hell who drops phlegm, spittle, rheum, tears or dirt on the bank of Gaṅgā".

Speaking in highly exaggerated terms which is a characteristic feature of the Purāṇic style is very frequently seen here also. Ethically so insignificant an act as bathing the image of Viṣṇu with water from a conch is said to result in freedom from such heinous sins as murder of a brāhmaṇa, a cow, a woman, or causing abortion* or drinking liquor. And, "for as many thousands of Kalpas a man rejoices with Viṣṇu as the steps he would devoutly walk while going round Viṣṇu."

Since the ancient Vedic times the Brāhmaṇa in India enjoys the highest position, for he is said to be born from the mouth of the Cosmic Puruṣa, and the Purāṇas have carried this pro-brāhmaṇism to its extreme limit. This Purāṇa also is no exception as is evident from its declaration that "all the holy places that exist in crores of worlds exist in the right foot of a brāhmaṇa" and

*Control of population was no problem at the time.

also from the fact that it enjoins gifts of garments, food, cow, land, horse, elephant etc. always to a brāhmaṇa. However, this is not unconditional, as the Purāṇa says that all the brāhmaṇas are superior and always respectable, but those who are spoilt by such blemishes as theft, bad conduct etc. are not respectable and gifts should not be given to them. As compared to such brāhmaṇas śūdras with their senses curbed were deemed respectable. Further, "a brāhmaṇa who is not a devotee of Viṣṇu should be known to be inferior to a cāṇḍāla, while a cāṇḍāla who is devoted to Viṣṇu should be known to be superior to a brāhmaṇa." The Purāṇa has even gone to the other extreme by declaring that Viṣṇu is a cāṇḍāla in the city of Puruṣottama (i.e. Jagannātha Purī) and so food offered by cāṇḍālas should be accepted by brāhmaṇas at that holy place. Incidentally, this city is said to be situated on the shore of the "Lavaṇa Sea in the west", which may be taken as showing that the author of this Purāṇa or of this Section (VII) at least was probably a native of Bengal or Assam. As regards śūdras, this much is certain that the social problems connected with this lowest stratum of the Hindu society were not as acute at the time of this Purāṇa as they became in the later and modern period, as is evident from the remark: "The wise ones should honour like Viṣṇu brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras who have come to their house."

—G.P. Bhatt

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ABBREVIATIONS

Common and self-evident abbreviations such as Ch(s)—Chapter(s), p—page, pp—pages, v—verse, vv—verses, Ftn—Footnote, Hist. Ind. Philo.—History of Indian Philosophy are not included in this list.

ABORI	*Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Poona
AGP	S.M. Ali's *The Geography of Purāṇas*, PPH, New Delhi, 1973
AIHT	*Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, F.E. Pargiter, Motilal Banarsidass (MLBD), Delhi
AITM	*Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology* Series, MLBD, Delhi
AP	*Agni Purāṇa*, Guru Mandal Edition (GM), Calcutta, 1957
Arch. S.Rep.	Archaeological Survey Report
AV	*Atharva Veda*, Svādhyāya Maṇḍal, Aundh
Bd. P.	*Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, MLBD, Delhi 1973
BG	*Bhagavadgītā*
Bh. P.	*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Bhagavat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad
Br.	*Brāhmaṇa* (preceded by name such as Śatapatha)
BS. P.	*Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*, Vishnu Shastri Bapat, Wai
BV. P.	*Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*, GM, 1955-57
CC	*Caturvarga Cintāmaṇi* by Hemādri
CVS	*Caraṇa Vyūha Sūtra* by Śaunaka, Com. by Mahīdāsa
DB	*Devī Bhāgavata*, GM, 1960-61
De or GDAMI	*The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval India*, N.L. De, Oriental Reprint, Delhi, 1971
Dh. S.	*Dharma Sūtra* (preceded by the author's name such as Gautama)
ERE	*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* by Hastings
GP	*Garuḍa Purāṇa*, ed. R.S. Bhattacharya, Chowkhamba, Varanasi, 1964

GS	*Gṛhya Sūtra* (preceded by the name of the author such as Āpastamba)
HD	*History of Dharma Śāstra*, P.V. Kane, G. O. S.
IA	*The Indian Antiquary*
IHQ	*The Indian Historical Quarterly*
JP	*Purāṇa* (Journal of the Kashiraj Trust), Varanasi
KA	*Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra*
KP	*Kūrma Purāṇa*, Veṅkaṭeśvara Press Edn., Bombay; also Kashiraj Trust Edn., Varanasi, 1971
LP	*Liṅga Purāṇa*, GM, 1960; also MLBD, Delhi, 1981
Manu.	*Manusmṛti*
Mbh.	*Mahābhārata*, Gītā Press, Gorakhpur, VS 2014
MkP	*Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*
MN	*Mahābhārata Nāmānukramaṇī*, Gītā Press, Gorakhpur, VS 2016
MtP	*Matsya Purāṇa*, GM, 1954
MW	Monier Williams' *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, MLBD, Delhi, 1976
NP	*Nāradīya* or *Nārada Purāṇa*, Veṅkaṭeśvara Press, Bombay
PCK	*Bhāratavarṣīya Prācīna Caritrakośa*, Siddheshwar Shastri, Poona, 1968
Pd. P.	*Padma Purāṇa*, GM, 1957-59
PE	*Purāṇic Encyclopaedia*, V. Mani, English version, MLBD, Delhi, 1975
PR or PRHRC	*Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, R.C. Hazra, Calcutta, 1948
ṚV	*Ṛg-Veda*, Svādhyāya Maṇḍal, Aundh
Śat. Br.	*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*
SC or SMC	*Smṛti Candrikā* by Devanna Bhaṭṭa
SEP	*Studies in Epics and Purāṇas*, A.D. Pusalkar, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (BVB), Bombay

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED FORTYSIX

Jarāsandha Defeated

Śrī Maheśvara said:

1-7. Then Vasudeva performed the thread ceremony of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa according to the Vedic rite. The preceptor Garga performed the ritual for Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. The very strong Rāma and Kṛṣṇa whose purificatory rites were performed by the learned devotees of Viṣṇu, with clean, auspicious baths, went to the house of Sāndīpani. Having saluted him, and having learnt the Vedic texts and the scriptures from that noble best brāhmaṇa, they brought (back to life) his dead son, and gave that as the fee. Having received words of blessing from that noble preceptor, the two best Yadus saluted him and went (back) to Mathurā. Then the very mighty Jarāsandha, the father-in-law of that king (i.e. Kaṁsa), having heard that the invincible Kaṁsa was killed by Kṛṣṇa, came with a very great army having a strength of thousands of akṣauhiṇīs[1] to kill Kṛṣṇa and besieged the city of Mathurā.

8-16. The very powerful Rāma and Kṛṣṇa went out of that excellent city, and saw the flood of his army abounding in elephants and horses. Kṛṣṇa recollected his former, eternal form. Just by means of its recollection, Dāruka, Viṣṇu's charioteer brought the great chariot named Sugrīvapuṣpaka which was ancient and was drawn by ancient horses like Divyapuṣpa, which was equipped with divine weapons like the conch, the disc, the mace etc., was decorated with the flag (having on it the figure) of Garuḍa and was unconquerable (even) for gods. Viṣṇu's charioteer, on reaching the earth, saluted Kṛṣṇa and presented to him the bright chariot, possessed of weapons and horses. Kṛṣṇa too, seeing the great chariot with joy, took himself round it, and being praised by the hosts of gods, got into it along with his elder brother. He, being one with a body having four hands, holding the conch, the disc, the mace, wearing a crown, ear-rings, garlands, proceeded to fight. The strong Balarāma also, taking a pestle and a plough, started killing that army like an-

1. One akaṣuhiṇī = 21870 chariots + 21870 elephants + 65610 horses + 109350 foot-soldiers.

other Maheśvara. Dāruka too quickly drove the chariot to the battlefield, as wind (drives) fire in a forest covered with clusters of grass and creepers.

17-24. Then Jarāsandha's soldiers covered that chariot with maces, iron bars, (missiles called) śakti, and hammers. Viṣṇu quickly and easily destroyed them with his disc only, as a great fire destroys many (blades of) grass and (pieces of) wood with its flame. Then taking the Śārṅga (bow) (Kṛṣṇa) destroyed those troops with sharp arrows. Nothing was known about (the massacre). Some very strong ones had their lotus-like faces cut off with the disc. In the great battle some were crushed with the mace; some with (some) other (weapon). Some were cut off with the sword; others were struck with arrows. The necks of some were struck with the tip of the plough; the heads of some were struck with the pestle. Having, in a moment, killed that entire army, the best of the Yadus, Kṛṣṇa, blew his conch, sounding like the sound of the destructive fire. The great warriors, with their hearts rent by the sound of the conch, fell dead along with horses and elephants. Kṛṣṇa alone killed that army consisting of a thousand akṣauhiṇīs along with horses, chariots and elephants. The army had none left in it.

25-32. In half a watch Kṛṣṇa, the holder of the Śārṅga (bow) killed the army. Then all the hosts of gods with their hearts full of joy, dropped showers of flowers, and shouted, "Well (done), Well done!" The supporter of the earth having shed (i.e. removed) the entire burden of the earth, and being praised by gods, shone on the battlefield. The very mighty, wicked Jarāsandha, seeing his army killed, came to fight with Balarāma. The fight between the two not retreating from fights was very fierce. The brave Rāma, taking his plough, knocked down his chariot along with the charioteer on the battlefield, and seizing the very strong one, raised the pestle and set out to kill him. Lord Kṛṣṇa seeing that the powerful Rāma had made Jarāsandha, the best king, face the peril to his life as a lion would do to a great elephant, said to his elder brother: "(Please) let him not be killed." The righteous, very intelligent one got Jarāsandha freed. The immutable Saṁkarṣaṇa freed his enemy at the words of Kṛṣṇa.

33-37. He, along with his younger brother (Sunāman) got into a chariot and entered Mathurā (? Magadha). Having approached Kālayavana, the powerful one, endowed with might, he told him about the valour of Vasudeva's sons. He narrated to him the destruction of the akaṣauhiṇīs, so also his own defeat and the great deeds of Kṛṣṇa. Hearing that the very powerful, angry (Kāla)Yavana, surrounded by thousands of crores of arrogant, very strong and brave mlecchas, went quickly to Mathurā for the help of the king of Magadha.

38-39. Having covered the earth with many countries with his troops, and having placed a large army (outside the city), he besieged the city of Mathurā. Kṛṣṇa too, thinking of the welfare of his citizens then asked the Ocean for (some) land for the people to reside (on).

40-46a. The Ocean gave Kṛṣṇa (a piece of land) having an expanse of thirty yojanas. In the water he created the Dvāravatī city. It had many palaces; its ramparts and arched doorways were golden. It was covered with rows of divine houses having (i.e. decked with) various jewels. It also had many charming gardens and lakes. The lotus-eyed (Kṛṣṇa) fashioned it like Indra's (city) Amarāvatī. Janārdana (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) suddenly, at night, lifted the people that were asleep there, and put them in Dvāravatī. When the people along with their sons and wives got up, they (found themselves) placed in golden mansions and (so) were much amazed. Surrounded by principal houses full of such objects of enjoyments as much wealth, corn, divine garments and ornaments, they stayed there as the hosts of gods (live) in heaven.

46b-52. Then the very powerful Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, the lords of themselves came out of Mathurā to fight with (Kāla)Yavana. Rāma, the great warrior, taking a plough and a pestle, being angry, killed the great army of the Yavanas in the battle. Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, strung the Śārṅga (bow) with arrows resembling flames of fire, and burnt the entire army of the mlecchas. Seeing his army killed, that mighty Kālayavana, the lord of Yavanas, fought with Kṛṣṇa, with a mace. Seeing that great havoc (done) by him for a long time, the lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa too, turning away from the battle, retreated. (Kālayavana) very

speedily followed him, saying, 'Wait, wait'. The very intelligent Kṛṣṇa speedily entered a cave. There the great sage, the king Mucukunda, was asleep.

53-55. Lord Kṛṣṇa remained invisible to the king. The great hero, Yavana also, raising his mace with his hand, and set out to kill Kṛṣṇa, entered that cave. Seeing the king that was asleep, and taking him to be Kṛṣṇa, Yavana struck the great sage Mucukunda with his foot. Then the revered great sage, Mucukunda, woke up.

56-60. He, with his eyes red through anger, made a *hum* sound. Due to his *hum* sound, so also due to looking at (Kālayavana) angrily, the Yavana was completely burnt, was reduced to ash and (thus) gave up his life. Then in front of the royal sage was seen Kṛṣṇa, who was dark like the petals of a blue lotus, whose eyes were like lotuses, who had the conch, the disc, the mace in his hands, and who had put on yellow garments. Seeing him of an unlimited lustre, the great sage suddenly got up and said, "Oh, great luck, great luck (to me)!" With his entire body horripilated, and (his eyes) full of tears of joy, he praising him with shouts of victory repeatedly saluted him (i.e. Kṛṣṇa).

Mucukunda said:

61-66. O highest lord, seeing (you) I am today fortunate; I am blessed. Today my existence is fruitful; my life is fruitful. Salutation to Vāsudeva, Jagannātha (the lord of the world), Śārṅgin (holder of the Śārṅga bow), to Dāmodara, to the god, the treasure of lustres. Salutation to Adhokṣaja, to Hari, who had taken up the form of Man-Lion. Salutation to you, to Rāghava, the lotus-eyed one. Salutation to Acyuta (unfallen), to (A-)Vikāra (changeless) and Ananta (unlimited). Salutation to you, to Govinda, Viṣṇu, Jiṣṇu (conqueror). Salutation to Nārāyaṇa, to the lord of Śrī, to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, to the highest soul. Salutation to you, to Mukunda, to you having four forms. Salutation to you, the highest well-being, to the highest soul. Salutation to Vāsudeva, to Śānta (the peaceful one), to the lord of the Yadus.

Maheśvara said:

67. Having thus praised Govinda, he repeatedly saluted him. The lord, who was pleased, said to Mucukunda, the great sage:

The lord said:

68-70. O royal sage, ask for the boon which is in your mind.

Maheśvara said:

He too asked for liberation free from rebirth. Then Kṛṣṇa gave him the divine ancient world. The very intelligent king also having given up the human form, obtained the same form as of the god, the highest soul. Having mounted upon Garuḍa, he reached the eternal position.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED FORTYSEVEN

Rukmiṇī's Abduction

Rudra said:

1-3. After the intelligent Mucukunda had killed Yavana, the descendant of Yadu gave him a boon, and went out (of the cave). Having heard that Yavana was killed, the very wicked Jarāsandha, surrounded by his army, fought with Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa killed the entire army of that wicked one. The lord of Magadha, having fainted, fell on the ground.

4-7a. The lord of Magadha, having regained consciousness after a long time, and being distressed by fear and his body afflicted by fear, could not fight with Rāma in the battle. With his remaining army and followers killed, he, turning away (from the battle) ran away. Taking the (two) Rāma and Kṛṣṇa as unconquerable, he gave up hostility against them and entered his own city. Then the two sons of Vasudeva, along with their army left the city of Mathurā and entered the city of Dvārikā.

7b-10a. Vāyu, sent by Indra, affectionately gave Kṛṣṇa the assembly(-hall) of gods, which was fashioned by Viśvakarman, was decorated with diamonds and lapis lazuli, graced with many seats, which shone with divine golden umbrellas, full of (i.e. decked with) various gems. The kings like Ugrasena along with the traders, on arriving at the charming assembly(-hall), were delighted as hosts of gods (are delighted) in heaven.

10b-12. The king named Raivata, born in the Ikṣvāku family, affectionately gave Rāma his daughter named Revatī who was endowed with all (auspicious) marks. That Rāma duly married that Revatī and amused himself with her as Indra with Śacī.

13-19. Bhīṣmaka, the king of Vidarbha, was pious and virtuous. He had good sons like Rukma. (Bhīṣmaka's) daughter, their youngest sister was Rukmiṇī, of an excellent complexion. She was born with a portion of Lakṣmī and had all auspicious marks. She was Sītā in (the lord's) existence as Rāma, and was Rukmiṇī in his birth as Kṛṣṇa. She accompanied Viṣṇu in his other incarnations also. In the Dvāpara (age) Hiraṇyaka and Hiraṇyākṣa were again born with the names Śiśupāla and Dantavaktra. The two very mighty and brave ones were born in the family of the Cedi (king). His son desired to give Rukmiṇī (in marriage) to Śiśupāla. The beautiful-faced (Rukmiṇī) did not want Śiśupala as her husband. She, of a firm vow, was attached to Viṣṇu from her childhood. That virgin Rukmiṇī, dedicated to Viṣṇu, always worshipped the deities and gave various presents (to brāhmaṇas).

20-21. Highly devoted to practising vows, and thinking of Viṣṇu, the lord of the soul, as her husband, she lived in her father's house. Through his intelligent son Rukmin, the best king tried to get her married to Śiśupāla.

22-23. Intending to have Kṛṣṇa as her husband, she sent a brāhmaṇa, the son of her family-priest (to Kṛṣṇa). He quickly went to Dvārakā. Having approached Kṛṣṇa and Rāma and being duly honoured by them, he told them in private what Rukmiṇī had said.

24-26. Having heard it, the two best among men, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, along with that intelligent brāhmaṇa, got into the chariot full of all weapons and missiles and moving (even) in the sky along with the noble Dāruka, quickly went to the (capital) city of Vidarbha. All kings, led by Jarāsandha, from all countries had come to witness the marriage(-ceremony) of the intelligent Śiśupāla.

27-30. At the time of the marriage, Rukmiṇī, having put on golden ornaments, went out of the city with her friends to worship Durgā. At that time only Devakī's son (Kṛṣṇa) reached

(there). The strong Kṛṣṇa seized her who was in her chariot. Suddenly putting her into his chariot he quickly came home. Then kings like Jarāsandha, full of anger, went along with prince Rukmin, to fight (with Kṛṣṇa). With their army having the four-fold division, the angry ones pursued Kṛṣṇa.

31-35. The powerful Balabhadra, having got down from his excellent chariot, took the plough and the pestle and in a moment struck the enemies. With force he struck the chariots, horses, great elephants and foot-soldiers also with his plough and pestle in the battle. Due to the fall of his plough the rows of chariots were pounded. The elephants also fell on the ground as mountains due to (the fall of) the thunderbolt (on them). The heads of all were broken; all vomitted blood profusely. At that time, in a moment, Balarāma struck down the army along with the horses, the elephants and the chariots in the great battle. On the battlefield there rivers of blood flowed on all sides.

36-42. All the kings that were routed, being tormented by fear, fled away. The powerful Rukmin, through anger, fought with Kṛṣṇa. Raising his bow, he struck Kṛṣṇa with volleys of arrows. Then Kṛṣṇa laughed and taking his Śārṅga (bow) struck with one arrow the horses of his chariot and the charioteer. The supporter of the earth rent his chariot, flag and banner. He, deprived of his chariot, stood on the ground. The powerful Kṛṣṇa cut off his sword with one arrow. Then raising his fist, he struck Kṛṣṇa on his chest. Kṛṣṇa binding him, seized him on the battlefield. Kṛṣṇa (i.e. Viṣṇu), the killer of (the demon) Madhu, smiled, and taking an arrow with a sharp horse-shoe-shaped head, shaved his head and left him. He, full of grief, and hissing like a serpent, entered his own city and stayed there only.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED FORTYEIGHT

Rukmiṇī Formally Married to Kṛṣṇa

Rudra said:

1-6. Then getting into the divine chariot along with Rāma, Rukmiṇī and Dāruka, Kṛṣṇa speedily went home. Then having entered the city of Dvārakā, (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) the son of Devakī, married princess Rukmiṇī decorated with (ornaments of) gold according to the Vedic rite on an auspicious day and at an auspicious time. At the time of that marriage divine drums were sounded, and the best gods dropped showers of flowers. Vasudeva, Ugrasena, so also Akrūra, the best Yadu Balabhadra of a great lustre, so also other principal Yadus married Kṛṣṇa to Rukmiṇī with great pleasure. The cowherd Nanda came (there) with young cowherds and hosts of (other) cowherds. Yaśodā also came there with well-decorated ladies.

7-10. All the wives of Vasudeva led by Devakī, Revatī, queen Rohiṇī, and other ladies from the city performed all the marriage-rites with great joy. Devakī there affectionately honoured all gods. She got done the entire nuptial rite properly with (the help of) old ladies, and also a celebration through best brāhmaṇas. She fed the brāhmaṇas and kings like Ugrasena were well honoured with auspicious garments and ornaments.

11-14. Cowherds like Nanda, ladies like Yaśodā were honoured with many ornaments of gold and jewels and with garments. They were also delighted in that marriage-celebration. The couple together saluted Agni. The two were congratulated with blessings by principal brāhmaṇas knowing the Vedas. On that marriage-altar the bride and the bridegroom shone. The kṣatriya (viz. Kṛṣṇa), the son of Devakī, with his wife saluted old brāhmaṇas, so also his elder brother.

15-19. Kṛṣṇa, having thus completed the entire nuptial rite dismissed all kings that had come there. The best kings honoured by Kṛṣṇa proceeded (homewards). The very noble brāhmaṇas went to their respective abodes. The pious, immutable son of Devakī, quite happily lived in that divine mansion. He, being praised by sages and hosts of gods in heaven, amused himself

with her as Viṣṇu with Lakṣmī. The eternal Viṣṇu, with his mind pleased day by day lived in the very beautiful Dvāravatī.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED FORTYNINE

Kṛṣṇa's Other Marriages

Śrī Rudra said:

1-6. The glorious daughter of Satrājit, named Satyā, born with a portion of the Earth, was another wife of Kṛṣṇa. The glorious daughter of the Sun, named Kālindī, was his third wife. She had come up as a portion of Līlā. Kṛṣṇa married Vindānuvinda's daughter Mitravindā of a bright smile, who had stood for self-choice marriage. He whose eyes were large like lotus-leaves, having bound with one noose the seven maddened bulls, took her with the dowry of his valour. King Satrājit gave to his younger brother, the noble Prasena, a great jewel called 'Syamantaka'[1]. Sometime Kṛṣṇa asked for that excellent gem. Then Prasena violently said to Vāsudeva:

Prasena said:

7. This gem everyday produces eight bhāras of gold. There-

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1. Syamantaka—A kind of gem said to yield eight bhāras of gold and to protect the owner from all kinds of dangers and portents. Satrājit, son of Nighna, got it from the Sun, and always wore it round his neck. He afterward gave it to his brother Prasena, from whom it passed into the hands of the monkey-chief Jāmbavat who got possession of it after having killed Prasena. Kṛṣṇa, however, overtook Jāmbavat and vanquished him in fight after a long struggle. The monkey-chief thereupon presented it along with his daughter to Kṛṣṇa; Kṛṣṇa then gave the jewel back to its proper owner Satrājit who out of gratitude presented it along with his daughter Satyabhāmā to him. Afterwards when Satyabhāmā was at her father's house with the jewel, Śatadhanvan at the instigation of a Yādava named Akrūra who desired the jewel for himself, killed Satrājit and gave it to Akrūra. Śatadhanvan was afterwards killed by Kṛṣṇa, but when he found that the jewel was with Akrūra he allowed him to retain it with himself after having once shown it to the people.

fore, this gem called Syamantaka is not to be given to anyone by me.

Mahādeva said:

8-12. Having understood his intention, Kṛṣṇa remained silent. Sometime with all the best Yadus like very powerful Prasena, Kṛṣṇa went ahunting, and entered a great forest. Many in thousands followed, each one to hunt beasts. Prasena alone went far in the great forest. A lion on seeing him approached him, killed him, and snatched the gem. The very mighty Jāmbavat also killed the lion, seized the gem and quickly entered a cave resorted to by the divine women. When the sun had set, Kṛṣṇa along with his followers, entered his own city on seeing the moon risen on the fourth day.

13-18. Then all the citizens said to one another about Kṛṣṇa: "Kṛṣṇa having killed Prasena in the forest under the pretext of hunting, has definitely taken the Syamantaka gem." Kṛṣṇa, having heard those words of the people of Dvārakā, went to a dense forest through the fear of ignorant people. He showed to all of them (Prasena) killed by a lion. Having proved his innocence and having placed a great army there only, Kṛṣṇa alone went to a dense forest with Śārṅga-bow and his mace in his hand. Seeing a great cave, Kṛṣṇa entered it with a doubt. In it, in a clean house brightened with various excellent jewels, a maid having placed Jāmbavat's son on a swing and sportively holding the (Syamantaka) gem on its top, was oscillating the swing and singing with joy:

19-25a. "A lion had killed Prasena. The lion was killed by Jāmbavat. O good boy, do not cry. This Syamantaka belongs to you (only)." Hearing it, the brave Kṛṣṇa blew his conch. Due to that great sound Jāmbavat came out to the place. Continuously for ten (days and) nights a fierce fight, with fists like the thunderbolt, and frightening all beings, took place between the two. Jāmbavat, seeing the increase in Kṛṣṇa's might, and decrease in his own, realised the former words of the Supreme Being. 'This is that Rāma that has again descended for the protection of Dharma. That my master has come to grant me (the object of) my desire.' Knowing like this the lord of the bears desisted from the fight, and with great amazement, he, with his palms joined,

asked Śrī Kṛṣṇa: "Who are you?" Kṛṣṇa, stopping fighting said with a grave voice:

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

25b-26 I am Vasudeva's son, called Vāsudeva. You very fearless, have taken away my gem called Syamantaka. Give it (back) to me quickly. Otherwise you will be killed.

Mahādeva said:

27. Hearing those (words), Jāmbavat was delighted. He saluted (Kṛṣṇa) by (prostrating himself before him) like a staff. Having taken himself round Kṛṣṇa, and saluting him, he spoke to him politely:

Jāmbavat said:

28-29. I am lucky, I am satisfied after seeing you, O lord. O you son of Devakī, I am your servant due to (my being your servant in) the former existence. O Govinda, you have given the battle desired before. O you lord of the world, mine of pity, eternal one, forgive me this battle that I had with you through delusion.

Mahādeva said:

30-36. Speaking like this, and bowing and repeatedly saluting the lord he politely seated him on a seat full of (i.e. decked with) many gems. He washed his feet resembling fresh lotuses with auspicious water; worshipped the descendant of Yadu with a (respectful offering called) madhuparka; properly honoured him with (i.e. by giving him) divine garments and ornaments; he gave him, of unlimited lustre, as his wife, his daughter endowed with beauty, named Jāmbavatī, a gem among girls. He also gave him the great gem called Syamantaka, along with other gems. Kṛṣṇa, the delighted killer of his enemies, having married the girl there only, affectionately gave that Jāmbavat final beatitude. Gladly taking that girl, his (i.e. Jāmbavat's) daughter, he went out of the cave and from it went to the city of Dvārakā. The best Yadu gave the gem called Syamantaka to Satrājit; and to that daughter (of Jāmbavat) also he gave an excellent gem.

37-47. They say that seeing the moon on the fourth of the

bright half of Bhādrapada (leads to) a false charge. Therefore, one should avoid it. If a man sees the moon on that fourth day (i.e. of the bright half of Bhādrapada), he is freed from the false charge by listening to the account of the Syamantaka. The three beautiful bright daughters of the king of Madra, viz., Sulakṣmaṇā, Nāgnajiti, and glorious Suśīlā, standing for self-choice marriage, chose Kṛṣṇa (as their husband). On one day the descendant of Yadu married them. All these, beginning with Rukmiṇī, were thus the eight queens of the noble one: Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāmā, Kālindī of a bright smile, Mitravindā, Jāmbavatī, Nāgnajiti, Sulakṣmaṇā and Suśīlā, of a slim body, said to be the eighth one. A very powerful demon, the Earth's son, named Naraka, having conquered in a battle, Indra, the lord of gods, and all (other) gods, forcibly took away the very bright ear-rings of Aditi, the mother of gods, so also the various gems of gods. So also (he took away) the Airāvata elephant of Indra and his horse Uccaiḥśravas; and rubies etc. of Kubera, and his treasures Śaṁkha[1] and Padma. The Earth's son also kidnapped the (divine) and the celestial nymphs; so also he forcibly took away the gods' weapons like the thunderbolt; and with them only, he, having struck the gods remaining in the heaven, lived in the assembly-hall fashioned by Maya in that city in the spotless sky.

48-58. Then all hosts of gods led by Indra and overcome by fear, sought the rufuge of Kṛṣṇa, non-tormenting (one). Kṛṣṇa too hearing all those acts of Naraka, granted exemption from fear to gods and thought of Garuḍa. At that moment the very powerful Garuḍa, saluted by all gods, stood with his palms joined in front of that Viṣṇu. Keśava (i.e. Kṛṣṇa), having mounted on the best bird along with Satyā, and being praised by the sages, went to the demon's abode. It was shining in the sky like the orb of the sun. It was full of many demons and had many divine ornaments. Kṛṣṇa saw that city difficult to be broken through even by gods. The powerful lord, having observed its covers, cut them off with his disc, as the sun (removes) the darkness. Then all the demons, having raised their lances, went, in hundreds and

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1. Śaṅkha and Padma are two of the nine treasures of Kubera. The names of the nine treasures are: Mahāpadma, Padma, Śaṅkha, Makara, Kacchapa, Mukunda, Kunda, Nīla, and Kharva.

thousands to fight. Then with divine iron clubs, small javelins thrown with the hand, and good spears with a sharp edge they struck Keśava, as fire with straws. Then the eagle-bannered lord took his Śārṅga bow, and with arrows resembling the flames of fire, he cut off the divine weapons. The powerful Supreme Being cut off, with his disc only, their necks, elephants and speedy horses also. Some were cut off with the disc; others were struck with arrows.

59-65. In that battle some demons were struck with the mace. Thus all the demons were knocked down on the ground, as the mountains are pierced with thunderbolt discharged by Indra. The lotus-eyed Viṣṇu, having struck down all the demons, blew his great conch called Pāñcajanya. Then that brave Naraka, taking a bow and getting into a divine chariot came to fight with Keśava. The battle between the two was terrific, piercing and thrilling with many thousands of arrows like two showering clouds. Then the ancient, powerful son of Vasudeva cut off the bow of the chief of demons with a crescent-shaped arrow. He discharged a very divine missile on the great chest of Naraka. The great demon, with his chest pierced with it, fell on the ground roaring like a great mountain pierced by Indra with his thunderbolt.

66-68. Then Kṛṣṇa, having gone near the demon (lying) on the ground, and entreated by him, said to the demon: "Choose a boon." The demon said to Kṛṣṇa seated on Garuḍa: "I have nothing to do with a boon, though I am Naraka. For the good of other people I am asking for an excellent boon. O lord of the lord of all beings, O Madhusūdana, O you who remove the fear (of your devotees), those men who take an auspicious bath on the day of my death (will) not obtain (i.e. go to) hell."

Mahādeva said:

69-75. Lord Govinda gave him the boon: "Let it be so." Then actually seeing Viṣṇu's feet resembling the autumnal lotuses, and decorated with diamonds and lapis lazuli, honoured by Brahmā, Rudra etc., so also by (other) gods and sages, the Earth's son gave up his life and obtained absorption into Viṣṇu. Then all the hosts of gods, with their minds full of joy, dropped showers of flowers, and the great sages praised (him). The lotus-

eyed Kṛṣṇa entered his city. He gave to Indra, the wielder of the thunderbolt, the various gems of the gods forcibly snatched away by him, so also the ear-rings of the mother of gods, and the horse Uccaiḥśravas, the best elephant Airāvata and the blazing Maṇiparvata (literally, the mountain of gems). All this the best Yadu gave to Indra. The powerful Naraka had, after vanquishing kings from all countries, taken away sixteen thousand maidens.

76-80. All of them were then confined in the harem of Naraka. Seeing Kṛṣṇa of great might, and resembling a hundred Cupids, all of them chose him, the omnipresent lord of the universe, as their husband. At this time only Govinda, of endless forms, and the Supreme Being, duly took their hand (in marriage). All the sons of Naraka, led by the Earth, sought the shelter of Govinda. He, the treasure of pity, protected them. Due to (his giving) importance to the words of the Earth, he installed them all on his kingdom. He, putting all those excellent women into the aeroplane of Indra, took them to Dvāravatī through noble messengers of gods.

81-90. Having mounted upon Garuḍa, Keśava, along with Satyā quickly went to heaven to see the mother of gods. Janārdana, the very powerful one, having entered the city of the king of gods, got down from the best bird along with his wife. There he saluted the mother of gods fit to be saluted. Aditi, affectionate towards her son, embraced him with her arms, and having seated him on the chief seat honoured him devoutly. Ādityas, Vasus, Rudras, led by Indra, then worshipped the highest god as he deserved. The glorious Satyabhāmā came to the house of Śacī. Honoured duly by her she sat on a comfortable seat. At that time, her servants, directed by Indra, affectionately gave her the flowers of the Pārijāta (trees). Taking those flowers that slender-waisted goddess Śacī tied them on her own dark, clean hair on her head, insulting the glorious Satyabhāmā. 'This human female does not deserve the auspicious flowers fit for gods.' Thinking like this, she did not give the flowers to her. Going out of the city, Satyā, full of anger, went to her husband Kṛṣṇa, and the lotus-eyed one said (to him):

Satyā said:

91. O Govinda, O best of the Yadus, this Śacī being proud

of the Pārijāta put (the flowers) on her own head without giving them to me.

Mahādeva said:

92-100. Having heard the words of Satyā, the very strong Vāsudeva, Devakī's son, uprooted the Pārijāta tree, put it on Garuḍa, and having quickly mounted, along with Satyā, on the strong one (i.e. Garuḍa), he went to the charming city of Dvārakā. Then Indra, the king of gods, full of anger, got on the Airāvata, and along with Rudras, Vasus, Ādityas, Sādhyas and hosts of Maruts went to fight with Keśava. Then all the hosts of gods, having surrounded Viṣṇu (i.e. Kṛṣṇa), dropped showers of weapons on him as clouds drop showers of water on a great mountain. With his disc Kṛṣṇa cut off those missiles of gods. The angry Garuḍa made the gods fall down with the movement of his wings as the wind makes the straws (to fall down). Then lord Indra, the master of the gods, suddenly discharged his blazing thunderbolt to kill Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa easily caught that thunderbolt with one hand. Then the frightened Indra, getting down from his best elephant (Airāvata), stood, with the palms of his hands joined, before (Kṛṣṇa) and having saluted him, and after praising him with hymns, said in a faltering tone:

Indra said:

101. O Kṛṣṇa, this Pārijāta (tree) fit for the gods was formerly given to me and the gods. (Now) how can it remain in the human (world)?

Mahādeva said:

102-107a. Then the lord said to Indra standing by him: "O lord of gods, in your house Satyā was insulted. Your dear wife Pulomajā, instead of giving the Pārijāta (flowers) to Satyā, wore them on her own head. For her (i.e. Satyā) I took away the Pārijāta (tree) to give it to her as promised, O lord of the hosts of gods. I shall place the Pārijāta (tree) in your house. Therefore, O lord of gods, let the Pārijāta be not given today. For the good of the deities I shall send the Pārijāta to the earth.

Let it remain in my house till then. O Indra, when I go to heaven take it (back) as you like."

Mahādeva said:

107b-111. Speaking like this, the best of the Yadus, gave the thunderbolt (back) to him. Saying, "Let it be so", that wielder of the thunderbolt (i.e. Indra), went, surrounded by hosts of gods, to his divine city. Kṛṣṇa too, having mounted, along with Satyā, Garuḍa, and being praised by sages, entered Dvāravatī. (Then that) omnipresent Viṣṇu, having placed that divine tree, Pārijāta, near Satyā, enjoyed with all wives. That glorious Viṣṇu, taking all forms, and giving happiness, lived in the abodes of all of them during nights.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED FIFTY

Aniruddha's Marriage

Śrī Rudra said:

1-3. On Rukmiṇī was born Pradyumna, Madana's (Cupid's) portion, from Kṛṣṇa. He, the very mighty one born of Cupid, killed Śambara. Aniruddha was born from him on Rukmin's daughter.

4-10. He too married Bāṇa's daughter by name Uṣā. In her dream she, aged sixteen, having enjoyed properly (Aniruddha), dark like the petals of a dark lotus, having lotus-like eyes, of large arms, wearing beautiful ornaments, got up. Not seeing him after being awake, she, tormented by passion of love, with her mind confused, saying "O you having a face like a red lotus, where are you going?" lamented in many ways. Then her friend, named Citralekhā, seeing the girl reduced to that condition, asked her, "Why is your mind confused?" She too told her about the husband obtained in her dream. She too drew the pictures of all the best human beings and gods on a piece of cloth and showed them to her. She even properly showed her (the pictures of) Kṛṣṇa, Saṁkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, Aniruddha,

born in the Yadu family. Having approved out of the pictures that of Kṛṣṇa, she, seeing Aniruddha after Pradyumna, embraced it, saying: "This is he."

11-15. Then with many illusory demonesses Citralekhā at night went to Dvāravatī. She saw Aniruddha sleeping in the harem. She enticed him, seized him, and put him on the bed of Bāṇa's daughter in the harem of Bāṇa, full of many sanctuaries and mansions. He too became awake and on seeing Uṣā who lay on the soft couch, was marked with all (good) characteristics, adorned with beautiful ornaments, garments, sandal, flowers, who had a golden complexion, fine hair, well-developed breasts, embraced her who was full of love, and happily dallied with her. Old demonesses residing in the harem, having come to know about Aniruddha thus confined and continuously dallying (with Uṣā) for just a month, reported it to the king. The king, with his eyes red with anger, being very much amazed, sent the city-servants ordering them: "Bring him here". They too quickly went up the king's palace to arrest Aniruddha lying on the bed of the princess.

16-20. He, seeing them agitated, easily took out a pillar of the palace and in a very short time only smashed the servants numbering a million with the pillar. Then the lord of the demons, seeing his servants destroyed, became curious, and deciding 'This is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's grandson as told by the divine sage', he took his bow and himself came near Aniruddha to arrest him. Aniruddha too, seeing the king with a thousand arms having come to fight, whirling his iron club, hurled it at Bāṇa. He cut off that iron club with an arrow discharged from his bow. Then having tightly bound Aniruddha with the missile of serpent he placed him in his own harem.

21-25. Then Kṛṣṇa too, having learnt through the royal sage that it was just like that, mounted upon the best bird (i.e. Garuḍa), and along with Baladeva, Pradyumna and his army came to cut off the cluster of Bāṇa's arms. Formerly Bali's son (Bāṇa) had adored Śaṅkara. He had said to (Bāṇa): "Choose a boon." Bāṇa had asked for this boon from that lord: "Always be seated at the gate of my city for (its) protection, and kill the army of the enemy that might come there." Śaṁkara too, saying, "All right" to him, remained at the gate of his city with weapons,

his sons and attendants. Just at that time, seeing Kṛṣṇa to have angrily come along with his army, he got on his bull, and equipped with all weapons, and surrounded by his sons and attendants went out to fight (with Kṛṣṇa). Kṛṣṇa too seeing that lord of beings, who had held elephant's hide, a skull, who was decorated with blazing serpents, was tawny, had three eyes, had held the trident, was (capable of) destroying the entire host of beings, caused fear to all beings, resembled the fire of destruction, who was accompanied by his two sons, was surrounded by all his attendants, and who had destroyed Tripura, kept his army far behind, and accompanied by Balabhadra and Pradyumna started with a smile to fight with Rudra.

26-38. First a fierce (battle) took place between Kṛṣṇa and Śaṁkara, with arrows resembling the fire of destruction discharged from (Śaṁkara's bow called) Pināka and (Viṣṇu's bow called) Śārṅga. Rāma too had (a fight) with Bāṇa, and Pradyumna with Kārtikeya. The two great heroes fought like two haughty lions. Gajānana struck Yādava on his chest with his tusk. Rāma took a pestle and struck at his tusk. (Gajānana) having the rat as his vehicle, with his tusk broken, suddenly fled. Since then the lord of the attendants has his tusk broken in the world. He is called *Ekadanta* by gods, demons and gandharvas. (Kārtikeya) having the peacock as his vehicle fought with Pradyumna. Balarāma caused (Śiva's) attendants to run away. Śaṁkara, with his eyes very red, having fought with Kṛṣṇa for a very long time, put on his arrow a very blazing great fever, and discharged it. Kṛṣṇa by means of cold fever warded off that missile. The two fevers discharged by those two, Kṛṣṇa and Śiva, speedily entered the human world by their order. Those men who listen to (the account of) the battle between Kṛṣṇa and Śiva, are free from fever (or torment) and reach (Viṣṇu) the infallible one. Then that Hṛṣīkeśa (i.e. Kṛṣṇa), putting the deluding weapon on his arrow, discharged it at Śiva. Deluded by that missile, he yawned again and again; and he, Śaṅkara, the lord of gods, fell down on the ground in a swoon. Seeing his father unconscious, the powerful Kārtikeya, Ṣaṇmukha (literally, having six faces), raised the (missile called) Śakti and went to fight with Kṛṣṇa. Merely by the 'hum' sound, Kṛṣṇa turned him away.

39-45. Having thus vanquished the three-eyed god Śiva,

having the trident in his hand, the brave and the best of the Yadus blew his loud-sounding conch. Hearing that Śaṁkara, along with his sons, was vanquished by Kṛṣṇa, Bāṇa, getting into a chariot, himself came to fight with Kṛṣṇa. Suddenly seeing Kṛṣṇa seated on Garuḍa, he covered him with showers of many weapons and missiles, with maces, iron bars, lances, (missiles called) Śakti, iron clubs, swords, and discs continuously. Kṛṣṇa cut them off with his disc only. He discharged his (disc) Sudarśana to cut off his arms. The Sudarśana having a thousand spokes discharged at the king of demons quickly cut off the forest (i.e. the large number) of his arms in a thousand ways. In the meanwhile, O goddess, Pārvatī who had fulfilled her vow, came near Kṛṣṇa, and with the palms of her hands joined, said:

Pārvatī said:

46-49. O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, O lord of the world, O Nārāyaṇa, O treasure of compassion, O best of the Yadus, O lord of gods, I was your female servant in a former existence. At that time you, the pleased noble one, had granted me a boon about the perpetual state of having my husband living, O gentle one. O lord, the sages have declared that one principal name of your thousand names has given good fortune to Gaurī. O Govinda, O eternal one mounted on Garuḍa, make it true. Therefore, please give life to my husband.

Rudra said:

50-51. Thus addressed by the goddess the lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa withdrew the missile with which her husband was made unconscious. Freed from the missile of Kṛṣṇa, Śiva, the lord of all beings, got up and joining the palms of his hands, praised the lord of the worlds.

Śaṅkara said:

52-56. O Kṛṣṇa, O Kṛṣṇa, O lord of the world, O Supreme Being, O highest god, O highest lord, O you without a beginning and an end, O you immutable one, in the human beings there is a strong power. The action of taking up a body is due to you. It is the sign of honour. Be pleased with me. Salutation to you. O eternal one, be pleased with me. O lord of the world, favour me.

Be gracious to me, O Acyuta, Keśava. You are the creator, the supporter, the destroyer of the worlds. You are the father of the worlds. O lord of gods, you alone are the Brahman of the nature of intelligence and the lack of it. You are the origin. You are without an origin. You are the lord and Śeṣa also. You are Mahat; you are the highest Brahman; you alone are the individual soul.

57-61. O best of all gods, you are immortal; O lord of gods you are the lord of the mortals. Due to your extremely good character you have an origin. The two eternal highest souls have come up from your breath. So also the five elements (have come up from you) due to your great affection. You put yourself in the work of service (i.e. as a servant) in the perishable and the imperishable, in the highest abode resorted to by gods and the place of lustre, and in the universe. This is not otherwise. He who does not know you in the world, is a fool. You are the cause of everything. The wise ones know the abode of the lord of the low and high (to be good) for service (*obscure*!). They, the diligent ones rest at the position equal to the gods. The common man remains away to bow down to your eternal position.

62-69. That fourth stage (Turyā: the state of liberation of the soul) of charming rays of light is possible in your case. O you eternal superintendent, the couples talk about you. These best ones, O you beyond qualities, narrate your names, deeds, eternal qualities and grandeurs. O Keśava, in the former and latter learning full of action and knowledge, the two, along with their sons are singing the praise of you, the lord of young ladies (*obscure*!). You are wisdom; you are the highest Brahman; with your great knowledge only, O eternal one, you yourself, the wise one, give (him) life. Due to your grace only, he who knows the soul, obtains, in this world and the highest heaven, wisdom, proficiency, intellect, perception, so also courage, and all desired objects. Then he would be immortal. The self having this name is the heart. O lord, these ten are the names of the Wisdom, the treasure of compassion: (Ātman, Hṛd=heart,) mind, desire, reasoning, recollection, volition, penance, sacrifices, and love.

70-80. This you are the highest Brahman; this you are the creator. This you are Indra, Rudra, and all the deities. O highest lord, you are all these beings—sons, friends, (other forms) of

existence and others also, O eternal one. The viviparous, the oviparous, the beings generated by sweet sweat, plants, horses, cows, men, elephants and others, so whatever being there is, so also the movable beings, so also the immobile (objects)—all have sprung from you (only). The sacred texts describe you, Viṣṇu, as omnipresent. The people, impelled by you only act towards good or bad (things). Therefore, O ocean of pity, forgive by means of your most auspicious qualities this offence that I have committed. Salutation to you, O you lotus-eyed one, Govinda, Acyuta, Mādhava, Vāsudeva. O you fit to be saluted by the world, O Nārāyaṇa, salutation to you. O lord of the worlds, O Nṛsiṁha, O mine of pity, O lord of Lakṣmī, O omnipresent one, O glorious one, O highest soul, salutation to you. O lord, O you always worshipped by the liberated (souls) having Vaikuṇṭha as their dwelling place, O you lord of the three (Vedas), O Rāma, O you having lotus-like eyes, salutation to you. O you descendant of Yadu, salutation to you who destroy those that are a burden to the earth, who are of the form of Kṛṣṇa's mirth, who are Viṣṇu, who are Jiṣṇu (the conqueror).

Having thus praised and saluted Govinda, the lord of Umā, the lord of beings, having, joined the palms of his hands, spoke in a grave voice:

Rudra said:

81-90. O lord, this Bāṇa, Bali's son, is granted a boon by me. Formerly I had given him a boon that he had asked for, viz. immortality, O best of the Yadus. You deserve to do everything. Therefore, please protect this Bali's son, dear to me.

Saying "All right", the lord, Govinda, the ocean of compassion, withdrawing his disc, freed Bāṇa, Bali's son, who ran the risk to his life, had his arms cut off, and was covered with blood. Śaṁkara, the lord who had fulfilled his vow, after having freed Bali's son, having along with Pārvatī mounted the best bull (Nandin), went to his abode, the Kailāsa mountain. That Bāṇa, having saluted the very powerful Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, went with them to (his) city and freed (Aniruddha) Madana's son. Having honoured them, as they deserved, with divine garments and

ornaments, he gave Uṣā (in marriage) to Śauri, Kṛṣṇa's grandson. Then Rāma and Kṛṣṇa got Aniruddha duly married. They, along with Pradyumna, were then worshipped by Bāṇa. Then Kṛṣṇa, having placed Aniruddha with Uṣā in a divine chariot, went to Dvāravatī. Like Indra with the gods, Rāma with Pradyumna, and Kṛṣṇa with the army, entered the charming city. Aniruddha, full of joy, enjoyed day and night many pleasures in the company of Bāṇa's daughter in a house full of many jewels.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED FIFTYONE

Destruction of Pauṇḍraka's Son

Śrī Rudra said:

1-6. Then Pauṇḍraka Vāsudeva, king of Kāśī, fasted in a solitary place, and worshipping Maheśa for twelve years, muttered the five-syllabled formula. At the time of the repetition of the name of the deity he worshipped Śaṁkara with (i.e. by offering) his own lotus-like eye. Then the lord of Umā having the trident in his hand, being pleased, said to him: "Choose a boon". Then he said to Śiva who had five faces, is the lord of all beings, and was pleased: "O giver of boons, give me a form similar to that of Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa)." Śiva (gave) him (a form with) four arms with a disc, a conch, a mace and a lotus (held in them), having eyes like lotus-petals, having charming hair with a crown (on it) resembling that of Vāsudeva. Solicited by him as "Give me also the marks like a yellow garment, and ornaments like the Kaustubha", Śiva also gave him all that. He enticed all people, saying, "I am Vāsudeva".

7-9. Sometime Nārada, having come from heaven to that king of Kāśī, who was haughty with pride and power, said: "You cannot have the status of Vāsudeva without conquering Vasudeva's son." That moment only he, having put himself into a chariot with Garuḍa-banner, reached Dvārakā with the army of four divisions, (numbering) an akṣauhiṇī. There he sent a messenger (to Kṛṣṇa to tell him) "I, Vāsudeva standing in a golden

carriage at the gate of the city, have come to fight (with you). Without conquering me you cannot have the status of Vāsudeva."

10-14. Viṣṇu (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) too, having heard it, mounted upon Garuḍa and on coming out to fight with Pauṇḍraka, saw at the gate Pauṇḍraka with an army (numbering) an akṣauhiṇī, and seated in a chariot, and having a conch, a disc, a mace and a lotus in his hands. Kṛṣṇa took the Śārṅga (bow) and in a short time only completely destroyed that army (numbering) an akṣauhiṇī, consisting of horses, elephants and foot-soldiers with arrows resembling the fire of destruction in brightness. And with one arrow he easily chopped off the weapons in his hands like the conch, disc, mace etc. Having cut off his lotus-like head (adorned) with a crown, by means of his pure Sudarśana (disc), he caused it to fall into the harem in (the city of) Vārāṇasī. Seeing it all the residents of Kāśī, fearing 'What is this?' were amazed.

15-17. Daṇḍapāṇi, Pauṇḍraka's son, having heard that his father was killed by lord Vāsudeva, and directed by his mother, (as if) by Death, and told by his priest, offered a sacrifice, called Māheśvara, to Śaṅkara. He, being pleased, affectionately gave him a Kṛtyā (a female deity capable of destruction and proficient in magic) belonging to Maheśvara and capable of killing Kṛṣṇa. That Kāśī king, seeing that Kṛtyā of Maheśvara, that had a body full of a group of flames, had a blazing mass of hair, had tawny eyes, whose face was blazing and fierce, that had a trident in her hand, whose body was smeared with ash, who was adorned with the string of human heads, that caused fear to all gods, was presented by Rudra, impelled her to kill Kṛṣṇa along with his sons, wives and relations.

18-19. And she causing fear to the entire world, burning with her lustre the whole earth, and roaring with a sound strong like the fire at the time of deluge reached Dvārakā. All people staying there saw her and thinking it to be a great deluge, and wailing aloud, reported it to Kṛṣṇa.

20-24. Kṛṣṇa too told all of them not to fear, and seeing that very fierce Kṛtyā standing like that at the portal of the rampart, suddenly discharged that Sudarśana of a thousand spokes, capable of keeping off all weapons and missiles at the Kṛtyā. She, with lustre resembling that of a crore of suns at the time of the

end of a kalpa, seeing that great Sudarśana, going up a hundred yojanas, possessed of a thousand blazing weapons, made of gold, full of lustre, capable of making the entire world reduced to a condition at the time of deluge, saluted by all gods, the refuge of the entire world, lost her lustre, was overcome by fear, and crying (aloud) she ran to Vārāṇasī. Sudarśana too closely pursued her. She too, overcome by fear and crying entered that city of the king of Kāśī. Sudarśana also, reaching the city of Vārāṇasī, reducing to ash Pauṇḍraka's son, Daṇḍapāṇi, along with servants and army and elephants, so also the city of Maheśvara having many palaces and mansions, and being worshipped by all gods and great sages, again reached Kṛṣṇa's hand which was very soft, like a kalpa (sacred precept?). And about this the (following) verses are sung:

25-28. Having burnt with vigour that army discharging weapons and missiles and never decaying, reducing to ash the Kṛtyā, then the city of Vārāṇasī which had many chariots and elephants, and along with horses and men and women, and all stores and granaries, which was difficult to be seen even by gods, the houses, ramparts and courtyards of which were marked with doors, that disc of Viṣṇu burnt the entire city only. That disc, with its power of movement unexhausted, having accomplished what cannot be accomplished, with its lustre blazing, came to Viṣṇu's hand.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED FIFTYTWO

Kṛṣṇa Goes Back to His Abode

Śrī Rudra said:

1-3. After the killing of Kaṁsa, the king of Magadha, hating Yādavas, always troubled them. They, being afflicted, told (about it) to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa called Bhīma and Arjuna and consulted them: "He has worshipped Rudra. Due to his favour he cannot be killed with weapons. But somehow he must be kil-

led." Then having thought he said to Bhīma: "Wrestle with him." He promised to do so.

4-8. Then Vāsudeva, fit to be saluted by all the mobile and immobile world, went along with Bhīma and Arjuna in the guise of a brāhmaṇa to his city and reached his harem. He too having vanquished in battle very powerful kṣatriyas and having confined them, killed one of them every month and with his blood only made an offering to Bhairava. Thus exerting to kill Jarāsandha who had killed many men and kings, he along with Bhīma and Arjuna entered his house in the guise of a brāhmaṇa. He, seeing them, saluted them (by prostrating himself) like a staff, seated them on proper seats, worshipped them with madhuparka, and said to them: "I am fortunate; I am blessed. Why have you approached me? Tell it to me. I shall give all that to you." Out of them Vāsudeva, smiling, said to the king: "We Kṛṣṇa, Bhīma, and Arjuna have come to fight with you. Choose one of us for a duel."

9-12. He too said, "All right." Then he chose Bhīma for the duel. Then a fierce, continuous duel took place between Bhīma and Jarāsandha (lasting for) twenty-five days. Then prompted by Kṛṣṇa only (Bhīma) the son of Vāyu, split his (i.e. Jarāsandha's) body into two, and dropped it on the ground. Thus Kṛṣṇa, getting Jarāsandha killed by Pāṇḍu's son (Bhīma), freed the kings confined by Jarāsandha. (Kṛṣṇa) the descendant of Yadu, getting Jarāsandha killed by (Bhīma) Vāyu's son, freed the kings confined in his house.

13-20. All those, protected by Kṛṣṇa, having saluted and praised Kṛṣṇa, went to their respective countries. Then, going to Indraprastha with the two (i.e. Bhīma and Arjuna), Kṛṣṇa made Yudhiṣṭhira perform the Rājasūya sacrifice. There, after the sacrifice was over, the chief honour was given to Kṛṣṇa with the consent of Bhīṣma. There Śiśupāla spoke many abusive words to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa too cut off his head with the Sudarśana (disc). He, after three existences, was assimilated into Viṣṇu. Having heard that Śiśupāla was killed, Dantavaktra came to Mathurā to fight with Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa, having learnt about it, got into his chariot, and came to Mathurā.

21-24. On the bank of Yamunā, at the gate of Mathurā, a fight lasting a day and night took place between Dantavaktra and

Kṛṣṇa; and Kṛṣṇa killed him with (his) mace. He with his entire body smashed dropped dead on the ground like a mountain broken through with the thunderbolt. He too obtained the eternal, highest position, the absorption into Viṣṇu, obtainable by the meditating saints. Thus Jaya and Vijaya, under the pretext of the curse of Sanaka and others, descended into the mundane existence merely for the sport of the lord, and in the three existences they were killed by him alone. They obtained liberation at the end of three existences.

25. Kṛṣṇa also, having killed him (i.e. Śiśupāla), having crossed Yamunā, having gone to Nanda-vraja, having saluted his old parents, and having consoled them and embraced by them with their throats (choked) with tears, having embraced all old cowherds, having cheered them up with gems, ornaments, etc. gratified the residents there.

26-30. On the charming sandy bank of Yamunā, covered with auspicious trees, Kṛṣṇa incessantly sported with the cowherdesses. Viṣṇu, dressed as a cowherd, lived here for a couple of months with (i.e. enjoying) pleasure of charming sport and steady love. Then all the cowherds like Nanda, all people along with their sons and wives, beasts, birds, and animals took up a divine form due to Kṛṣṇa's favour, got into an aeroplane, and reached the highest world of Viṣṇu. Kṛṣṇa, having given all the residents of Nanda-vraja his own pure, highest position, and being praised in heaven by hosts of gods, entered the glorious Dvārakā. There, he taking up an omnipresent form, and along with Vasudeva, Ugrasena, Saṁkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Akrūra etc., and everyday worshipped by his sixteen thousand wives and his eight divine queens, enjoyed on very soft beds graced with flowers in many mansions.

31-35. Then a fellow religious student of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, a brāhmaṇa, their friend from childhood, very much oppressed by poverty, came, after having tied a handful of rice parched and flattened, obtained by begging, in an old piece of cloth, to the glorious city of Dvārakā to see Kṛṣṇa. He stood silent for a moment at the door of Rukmiṇī's harem. Kṛṣṇa too, knowing that a brāhmaṇa had come, went forth to greet him; and having saluted him and held him by his hand, seated him on an excellent seat in his house, and worshipped him who was trembling with fear with madhuparka after washing his feet with the water from

a golden pitcher in the hands of Rukmiṇī. Having gratified him with food, drink etc. resembling nectar, he himself took with his hand the parched and flattened rice that he had obtained by begging, and ate it with a smile. The moment Kṛṣṇa ate the parched and flattened rice, he had great affluence due to much wealth, corn, (many) garments and ornaments.

36-39. Dismissed by Kṛṣṇa, he, thinking that Kṛṣṇa did not give him a small piece of cloth, or wealth, entered his own city. Then seeing his own house full of much wealth and corn, he said: "Due to his favour I have got this." With his mind delighted by means of the divine garments and ornaments, he, along with his wife, enjoyed all pleasures, performed many sacrifices to please Viṣṇu, and due to his favour got the happiness of heaven. Then Dhṛtarāṣṭra's son Duryodhana, (having deceived) Pāṇḍu's sons under the pretext of gambling that was deceitful, took away their kingdom, and expelled them from his country. Those—Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva—along with their good wife Draupadī, went to a great forest. Having lived there for twelve years, and (having lived) *incognito* for a year, all of them lived in the house of Virāṭa, the king of Matsya (country); and came, with Kṛṣṇa's help to fight with the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

40-43. There took place a great war, causing fear even to gods, between the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and of Pāṇḍu at the very holy Kurukṣetra. Then Śrīkṛṣṇa also, acting as the charioteer of Arjuna, put his power into Arjuna, and getting all kings led by Bhīṣma, Droṇa etc. and along with an army consisting of eleven akṣauhiṇīs killed by him, he put the Pāṇḍavas on the kingdom (i.e. the throne). And having completely removed the burden of the earth, he entered his own city. After some time, on some day, a brāhmaṇa brought his five-year old dead son, and putting him at the gate of the palace, lamenting much, spoke many words of censure to Kṛṣṇa. Hearing that imprecation, Kṛṣṇa remained silent.

44-48. He (i.e. the brāhmaṇa) said: "My five sons have been formerly killed. This is the sixth one. If Kṛṣṇa does not bring him back to life, I shall die at the royal gate." At that time Arjuna had come to see Kṛṣṇa. He saw him lamenting like that due to the grief (caused by the loss) of his son. Arjuna too, seeing the five-year old boy dead, was full of pity, and granting the

brāhmaṇa protection, promised him: "I shall bring your son back to life." The brāhmaṇa, thus cheered up by him, was delighted. Then having consecrated the brāhmaṇā-child with life-restoring missiles, seeing him not regaining life, and finding himself of a futile promise, he, full of great grief, desired to give up his life with that only.

49-53. And Kṛṣṇa, knowing all that, came out of his harem, and said to that brāhmaṇa well-versed in the Vedas: "I shall give (you back) all your sons." Having cheered him, mounting upon Garuḍa, he, along with Arjuna came to Viṣṇu's world. Seeing Viṣṇu, along with the goddess (Lakṣmī) there, in a part of the jewelled pavilion, Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna saluted him. He embraced them with his arms, and asked them why they had come (there). Kṛṣṇa said: "O revered one, give me the sons of the brāhmaṇa well-versed in the Vedas." Then that Nārāyaṇa gave Kṛṣṇa those sons of the brāhmaṇa, who were of that age.

54-57. Srī Kṛṣṇa too, putting them on the shoulders of Garuḍa, and being full of joy, himself also mounted upon Garuḍa, and being praised by groups of gods, entered Dvāravatī. To that brāhmaṇa he gave the six sons aged five. He (i.e. the brāhmaṇa) too, extremely joyful, gave a blessing to Kṛṣṇa: "May you prosper." And Arjuna having had his promise fulfilled, saluted Kṛṣṇa and went to his own city protected by Yudhiṣṭhira. A myriad thousand sons were born to the sixteen thousand wives of Kṛṣṇa. It is not possible to tell the number of their sons and grandsons. Here (i.e. with regard to this) also there is a verse:

58-62. There were eight hundred thousands and a myriad of sons. Of all of them, Pradyumna, Rukmiṇī's son was the first. This earth was covered with those innumerable Yādavas. Fearing a burden to the earth again, Kṛṣṇa desired to destroy them under the pretext of a sage's curse. Sometime all the young boys came to sport in Narmadā. There, seeing the great sage Kaṇva practising austerity, they made Jāmbavatī's son put on the dress of a woman, and tying an iron pestle to his belly, they approached the sage, and placing Sāmba's son in the guise of a wife (husband?), said to him: "Tell us whether in (i.e. from) her womb a female or a male would be born."

63-67. He, knowing it mentally, and not tolerating it, said to them all: "Be killed with this pestle." All, with their minds

dejected, approached Kṛṣṇa, and reported to him what the sage had said, and that act (of them). Kṛṣṇa too threw the pounded iron pestle into a pool. From the seed of the iron (pestle) reduced to powder great kāśa (grass) resembling the thunderbolt came up. A fish ate a portion of the pestle, of the size of the small finger. A fisherman, catching that fish, took the piece of the pestle lying in the belly of the fish and fashioned (out of it) the point at the end of an arrow.

68-71. Sometime all the Yādavas like Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Pradyumna became intoxicated after drinking the spirituous liquor sent by Indra. They took to fighting with one another, and shouting loud words fought (among themselves) and perished. Kṛṣṇa, tired of fighting, slept in the shade of a desire-yielding tree. A hunter, taking a bow and an arrow, took to hunting. Thus they who had fully abandoned their lives, went to their respective gods.

72-74. Having thus destroyed everything with the pestle, the god himself slept in the shade of a great tree surrounded by many clumps of trees. Thinking about himself of the nature of Vāsudeva having four forms, and putting (one) foot on (another) knee, he sat (there) to abandon his human form. In the meanwhile, the hunter, due to the urging of Death, saw Hari's very red foot marked with a disc, a vajra, a banner, a goad etc., and pierced it. Then recognising him to be Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and struck by great fear and trembling he joined the palms of his hands and saluted him (saying), "Remove all my faults."

75-77. Śrī Kṛṣṇa seeing him in that condition, made him rise with his hands full of nectar, and said to him (words) consoling him who was oppressed by great fear: "You have not committed a fault." Then he granted him the world of Viṣṇu, which is accessible to the meditating saints (only), from which there is no return, which is eternal and full of all secret things. He gave up his human form just at that moment only; and along with all his sons and wives got into a bright, divine aeroplane and went to Viṣṇu's world which resembled a thousand suns in brightness, was crowded with hosts of celestial nymphs and was golden, and which had Viṣṇu in it.

78-83. At that time, Dāruka getting into a chariot, approached Viṣṇu. Kṛṣṇa too sent him (back, telling him), "First bring

Arjuna of my nature." He, getting into a chariot having the mind's speed, came near Arjuna. O goddess, in the meanwhile Arjuna got into it, went round (Śrī Kṛṣṇa), saluted him, and with the palms of his hands joined said: "What do (i.e. should) I do?" And Kṛṣṇa said to him: "O Pārtha, I shall go to my own world. Going to Dvāravatī and bringing (my) eight wives like Rukmiṇī staying there, send them into my body." With Dāruka he came to the city.

84-86. In the meanwhile, gods seated in their aeroplanes and remaining in the sky, saw Kṛṣṇa going to heaven; and along with the sages praised him and dropped on him showers of flowers. Kṛṣṇa too gave up his human body, took up the body of the form of Vāsudeva, which was the cause of the maintenance and destruction of the entire world, which was all the individual souls, which was meditated upon by meditating saints checking their internal feelings, mounted upon Garuḍa, and being praised by great sages, went (to Vaikuṇṭha). Arjuna told it to all the queens like Rukmiṇī, along with Vasudeva and Ugrasena.

87-90. Hearing that all citizens and ladies abandoned Dvāravatī and all those ladies dear to Kṛṣṇa, went out of the harem, and along with Vasudeva and Ugrasena quickly approached Hari. All those old Yādavas like Vasudeva, Ugrasena and Akrūra, abandoned their bodies and came to the eternal Vāsudeva. Revatī also embraced Balabhadra's body and entered fire. Having obtained a (divine) body in it, she got into a divine aeroplane and went to the divine world of Saṁkarṣaṇa, the place of her husband. In the same way Rukmaputrī with Pradyumna, Uṣā with Aniruddha and all Yādava ladies honoured the bodies of their husbands and entered fire.

91-94. Arjuna performed the obsequies of all of them. At that time Dāruka also, getting into the divine chariot called Sugrīva, yoked with divine horses and full of all gems, came (there). The Pārijāta tree and the assembly of gods also came to the world of the lord of gods. At that time the city of Dvāravatī submergd in the great ocean.

95-97. Then the enemies of gods seized all the sixteen thousand wives (of Śrī Kṛṣṇa) going to Indraprastha along with Arjuna. Formerly the wives of gods and gandharvas had laughed at the great sage Aṣṭāvakra after seeing him. He cursed them:

"You will be prostitutes." Then he was propitiated and honoured by them. Due to his grace they, even after obtaining Vāsudeva saluted by all the worlds, as their husband, got into the hands of the enemies of gods due to that (curse) only. Arjuna too, vanquished by the enemies of gods was overcome by grief. He thought: "The strength of my arms and all my glory have gone away with Kṛṣṇa." And saying (to himself): "Today my fortune has perished", he, with his lustre entirely perished like that of the evening sun, came to his own city.

98. Thus, for the good of all gods, for destroying the burden of the entire earth, Vāsudeva descended into the Yadu-family. He destroyed all demons and removed a great burden of the earth. He freed all the residents of Nandavraja, Dvārakā and Mathurā and all the mobile and immobile from the bonds of death and mundane existence, and settled them in (Vaikuṇṭha) which is full of great splendour, is eternal, which is accessible (only) to the meditating saints, is golden, charming and pure, and always being waited upon by divine queens etc. he lived (in Vaikuṇṭha). In this connection there are these verses:

99-107. There might be all other incarnations. (But) the deeds of Kṛṣṇa are great. The lord of Ramā appeared for destroying those who caused burden to the earth. These deeds of Kṛṣṇa were for destroying the wicked. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the ocean of pity, always delights in Vaikuṇṭha. O goddess, these auspicious deeds of Kṛṣṇa are very wonderful. I told them to you in brief. They give all fruits. He who would recite, remember or listen to this life(-account) of Vāsudeva with devotion near (the image of) Hari, goes to the highest position. Even he who has (committed) major sins or minor sins, is freed after listening to the deeds of young Kṛṣṇa. He who remembers Hari seated with Rukmiṇī in Dvāravatī, undoubtedly acquires great power. He, after meditating upon him, the leader of all gods, while in a battle, a danger, a difficulty or while surrounded by his enemy, would be highly successful. He who would remember him sporting with the young cowherdesses in the auspicious Govraja, gets all the desired (objects) and also good fortune. So also he who, suffering from great misfortune and diseases etc., would remember the eternal one, the vanquisher of the very fierce Kṛtyā living in the city of Kāśī (would be happy).

108-115. O you desiring the fruits of all times, what is the use of speaking much in this regard? A wise man should only utter the formula: 'Salutation to Kṛṣṇa'. 'Repeated salutations to Kṛṣṇa, Vāsudeva, Hari, the highest soul. I, bowing down repeatedly salute Govinda for the destruction of my affliction.' O goddess, a man should, everyday, with devotion, mutter this formula. Being free from all sins, he would obtain Viṣṇu's world. This lord Janārdana assumes different form(s) for the protection of all gods and of the worlds. I, with a desire to kill Tripura, worshipped Viṣṇu. The glorious one, taking up the form of Buddha, deluded his enemies. Those who were deluded by that teaching gave up all religious practices. (These) enemies of gods were killed by me with Viṣṇu's missile. Viṣṇu, descending in a brāhmaṇa's house at the end of Kali, will kill all the cruel Mlecchas. I have described along with all those appearances, all the forms of the lord of the world. O you of an auspicious face, what else do you want to listen to? I shall narrate it.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED FIFTYTHREE

Modes of Viṣṇu's Worship

Śrī Pārvatī said:

1-3. O venerable one, you have told me the very wonderful acts of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa in this (narration) of Kṛṣṇa's (deeds) in the state of grandeur. Oh, my heart, listening to the nectar of the tale of Hari—the acts of the noble Rāma and Kṛṣṇa—is not satisfied even for crores of kalpas, O lord of good, O lord of beings. Now I desire to listen to the excellent (account of the) greatness of Viṣṇu. O god, I also desire to hear about the manner of his worship.

Śrī Rudra said:

4-9. O goddess, listen. I shall tell you (the account) of the very noble Viṣṇu. The installation (of his idol) and his self-manifestation—these are the two aspects which it consists of. The

installation with (the accompaniment of) the rites as told in the Śrauta and Smārta texts, of the representation of Viṣṇu of a stone, clay, wood, iron etc., is said to be *Sthāpana.* Listen (as) I (tell you) to that which is called self-manifestation. That representation of Viṣṇu of stone or wood in which the lord of souls has placed himself for men is said to be self-manifest on the earth. One should worship Viṣṇu (whose representation is) either self-manifest or installed. Keśava, the lord of the world, the eternal one, himself approaches (the deities and the great sages) for their worship. Just that which was to be enjoyed in a (particular) body became manifest. One should always worship that only and take delight in that only.

10-16. Viṣṇu, the lord of gods, should be properly worshipped. Due to the penance of the Ikṣvāku lords, he himself appeared on the earth. That Mādhava, removing sins, is to be worshipped by me at Kāśī. I settling myself properly take delight in the charming house, after visiting it, where the old one is self-manifest. The lord of sacrifices is not obtained by men by means of Yoga of eight constituents, but in worship. Being the object of the eyes he gives the desired boon. Men easily attain him in (i.e. by means of) worship in all conditions. In the very meritorious, auspicious country of Bhārata, in Jambūdvīpa, on the earth, he is always present near even the ignorant. Viṣṇu is always near in a worship and never in other (modes of reaching him). Therefore, in the country Bhārata, he is, O goddess, always waited upon by sages and even by gods with rites like penance, sacrifice etc. In this country of Bhārata Viṣṇu is always near.

17-21. One should get rid of sin by purifying (oneself) at the Indradyumna (lake), Kaurmya, the Siṁha mountain, Karavīra, Kāśī, Prayāga or (the division of Bhārata called) Saumya, or the Śālagrāma mountain, Dvāravatī, Naimiṣa (forest), so also in Badarikāśrama, Pauṇḍarika and Daṇḍaka (forest), Mathurā, Veṅkaṭa-giri, Śveta mountain, Garuḍa mountain, Kāñcī, Anantaśayana, Śrīraṅga, Vāsava mountain, Nārāyaṇa mountain, Saumya, Varāha, Vāmanāśrama. These and others are self-manifest, and give all desired fruits. The good sages say that in that in which Viṣṇu himself is near, he is self-manifest.

22-26. The best among the great devotees of Viṣṇu should install the (idol of) Keśava according to the precept, and should

bring about his proximity by (muttering) a (sacred) formula. That installation is excellent. He should worship the god (installed) in it in villages and houses. The good recommend the worship in the house on a Śālagrāma stone. Praising, repeating the formula, sacrifice, abstract meditation on the magnanimous one, repeating his name, serving him, being marked with his signs (like the disc etc.) would be his worship. O auspicious one, it is divided into nine kinds. For a brāhmaṇa doing every act for him, is always laid down. A brāhmaṇa, a great devotee of Viṣṇu is the greatest teacher of men. He is venerable to all people as Viṣṇu is.

27-35. A brāhmaṇa who has gone through the five purificatory rites like being heated (with the Vaiṣṇava marks) and having five motives is said to be a great brāhmaṇa. The worship for a kṣatriya is laid down through the performance of the various acts. For vaiśyas the six types of worship are said to be: Marking (his body) with his (i.e. Viṣṇu's) marks, service, honouring those who belong to him, repeating the letters of the formula, repeating viṣṇu's names, and salutation to him. The worship for a śūdra (consists of) five (types): Repeating his names, service to him, worshipping and saluting him and honouring those who belong to him. O dear one, mental worship is common to all men. The worship of the lord of the world should be done according to one's fitness. Viṣṇu should always be worshipped by brāhmaṇas and others who are devoted to no other deity (than Viṣṇu), who do not wish to accomplish any other fruit (than securing him), who know the Vedas and the truth about Brahman, who are free from attachment, who desire salvation, who possess devotion for their preceptors, who are well-pleased, who are very good. Men should perform Viṣṇu's proper worship (i.e. the worship fit) for their castes. The good devotees of Viṣṇu should do (acts) proper for their castes and stages of life. An intelligent man should always properly perform the rites told in the holy texts and codes of law. He should never transgress the acts prescribed in the holy texts and codes of law.

36-39. That devotee of Viṣṇu, who does not practise the acts prescribed in the Śrutis and Smṛtis, becomes a heretic, and would stay in the Raurava hell. Therefore, a man should offer to the lord of the world a worship fit for his caste. One should always practise acts prescribed in the codes of law. O auspicious

one, the mental worship is common to all men. Only after considering his own fitness a man should carefully perform his duty. The means for all to acquire piety are: Tranquillity, control, austerities, purity, truthfulness, avoiding (eating) flesh, non-stealing, and harmlessness.

40-50. Therefore, one should worship Viṣṇu according to his caste and stage of life. Getting up at the end of night and having properly rinsed his mouth, and having saluted the elderly persons he should remember Viṣṇu in his heart. He being pure and controlled in his speech, should devoutly repeat the thousand names (of Viṣṇu). Having evacuated the bowels and discharged the urine[1] on the outside of the village, and having properly purified[2] himself, he, the restrained and pure one, should properly sip water and should properly bathe after having brushed his teeth. O auspicious one, taking the earth at the root of a tulasī along with its leaf, and having consecrated it with the principal formula and having smeared his body along with (the repetition of) the Gāyatrī hymn only, he should bathe after offering the expiatory formula. O you very pure one, having invoked there Gaṅgā rising from the feet of Viṣṇu, and having quickly dipped (into the water) he should repeat the excellent expiatory formula. Having sipped water, he should sprinkle his person with water in the order prescribed in the formula of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu. Then the wise one having quickly dipped himself, should repeat the primary formula twenty-eight times or one hundred and eight times. The devotee of Viṣṇu having consecrated himself with the formula (to be repeated) in water, should offer his prayers. Having sipped water, he should gratify deities, sages and dead ancestors. Having pressed his garment, having sipped water, he, the alert devotee of Viṣṇu, and the best brāhmaṇa, having put on a washed garment should take pure, charming clay and having consecrated it with a formula only, have on his forehead etc. the proper number of the upright sectarian marks. The wise one should then perform (i.e. offer) the sandhyā prayer and recite Sāvitrī (hymn).

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1. The reading is definitely 'Mala-mūtra' and not 'Mūla-mantra'.
2. Aghamarṣaṇa: Lit. expiatory, removing or destroying sin; usually applied to a prayer repeated by brāhmaṇas (the 190th hymn of the tenth Maṇḍala of the Ṛgveda).

51-55. He controlled in speech and mind, should go home and wash his feet. Having sipped water with a concentrated mind, he should enter the hall where worship is offered. Having placed (the idol of) the lord, the god Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa on a charming, very bright seat, adorned with a heap of flowers, he should worship him properly with sandal, flowers and sacred rice grains. The brāhmaṇa, with his mind controlled, should worship (the idol of) Viṣṇu—either installed or self-manifest—devoutly, properly and as deserved, according to the way told in Śrutis and Smṛtis. The devotee of Viṣṇu should do what is advised by his preceptor. The Śrauta way is Vaikhānasa and the Smārta is that of Vasiṣṭha.

56-59. What is laid down in Pañcarātra is called divine text. The rite should not be dropped; (for) the propitiation of Viṣṇu is the highest. He should gladly and according to his ability offer worship to Viṣṇu with invocation, seat, (offering) materials of worship etc., sandal, flowers, sacred rice grains, incense, lamps, offerings of eatables, tāmbūla etc. and salutations. The devotee of Viṣṇu should propitiate the deity with sixteen modes of paying homage to the accompaniment at every ṛc of the two hymns—Puruṣa-sūkta and the principal hymn. Again during the various modes of worship he should offer a handful of flowers.

60-70. With the (various) positions of fingers the devotee of Viṣṇu should invoke the lord of the earth. So also he should offer a seat with a flower and the finger-position. With the two principal hymns he should offer at every mode of worship lamp, materials of worship, (water for) sipping, a bath with pure water in vessels, and auspicious substances mixed with tulasī-leaves. Then with fragrant oil he should smear the idol. He should also rub and clean his body with musk and sandal. Having bathed with auspicious, fragrant water with (the accompaniment of) hymns, and having properly decorated (himself) with divine ornaments and garments, he should then offer madhuparka, so also sandal made fragrant. He should devoutly and properly offer fragrant, good flowers, incense, and very beautiful lamp having eight or ten limbs (i.e. wicks). He should also give various kinds of eatables, mixed with rice boiled with milk and cakes. He should also devoutly offer camphor with tāmbūla.

Having waved the lamps he should worship (i.e. offer) a garland of flowers. Having taken himself round (the idol) and having saluted and praised (it) with excellent hymns, he should offer auspicious materials of worship after making (the idol) lie on the lap of Garuḍa. Having repeated auspicious names, he should then perform a sacrifice. He should make an offering into the fire-circle with the remaining of eatables offered to Viṣṇu. He should (repeat) every ṛc (of) the Puruṣa-sūkta and the Śrīsūkta invoking auspiciousness. He should offer into the Vedic fire oblation mixed with ghee. He should devoutly offer (it) with the gem of a hymn as (already) mentioned.

71-81. Meditating upon great Viṣṇu of the form of sacrifice one hundred and eight times or twenty-eight times, he should offer the oblation. After meditating upon the lord (i.e. Viṣṇu) resembling pure gold, holding a conch, a disc and a mace, consisting of the entire Vedas, Vedānta, Aṅgas and Upāṅgas, seated with goddess Lakṣmī, he should perform a sacrifice. He should offer the oblation with (Viṣṇu's) names (uttered) after each offering. The best devotee of Viṣṇu should assign (offerings) to the eternal devotees. Then in due order, he should offer oblations to and particularly worship the Śaktis like Bhū, Līlā, Vimalā etc. first and then the deities like Ananta, Garuḍa etc. Then Vāsudeva etc. and deities like Śakti, so also images like that of Keśava, Saṁkarṣaṇa etc., Matsya, Kūrma etc. and the weapons like the disc, so also gods like Viṣṇu, and deities like the Moon, the guardians of the quarters like Indra, so also deities like Dharma should be offered oblations to and worshipped. The best devotee of Viṣṇu, being calm, should everyday, in his daily rite of worship offer the sacrifice to Viṣṇu. In the worship in the house, he, by offering properly the five sacrifices, should duly offer the oblation and then sip water. Seated on the white seat with the skin of the black antelope and darbhas placed on it he should bring about comfort for (being able to enjoy) pleasures by the use of hymns. Properly seated in the position of Padma he should purify the elements of the body.

82-90. With his senses controlled, he should, with a hymn, practise the three (kinds of) breath-control. Then facing the north he should bring about the expansion of the heart-lotus by means of the Sun of knowledge. The best devotee of Viṣṇu

should one by one, imagine in its pericarp, full of the three, the triad of the orbs of the sun, the moon, and the fire. On them he should imagine a seat full of many gems. He should (mentally) arrange at the end of the root of the heart-lotus a lotus with eight (kinds of) grandeur, having brilliance like that of the young sun, and full of the syllables of the mystic formula. Then the pure devotee, of a calm mind, should meditate upon lord Viṣṇu who is seated on it with goddess (Lakṣmī), who resembles a crore of moons, who has four hands, a beautiful body, who holds a conch, a disc and a mace, whose eyes are large like lotus-petals, who is distinguished with all (auspicious) marks, on whose chest are Śrīvatsa and Kaustubha, who has put on a yellow garment, beautiful ornaments, who is adorned with divine ornaments, whose body is smeared with divine sandal, who is graced with divine flowers, is adorned with the garland of wood-flowers and delicate leaves of tulasī, who resembles a crore of suns in lustre, whose body is embraced by Lakṣmī having all (good) marks, who is auspicious; having thus meditated, he should repeat the hymn.

91-96. Having with devotion mentally worshipped (Viṣṇu) a thousand or hundred times, or according to his capacity, he should stop. He should devoutly honour those who belong to him (i.e. his devotees), that have come at that time, and having pleased them by (giving them) food, drink etc., he should dismiss them after following them (a few steps). Having worshipped the dead ancestors he should duly gratify the deities. Having honoured the guests and servants, the couple should eat. He should always avoid the worship of yakṣas, demons and spirits. A brāhmaṇa who through folly worships them, would certainly become a cāṇḍāla. Resorting to yakṣas, goblins and deities enjoying liquor and flesh is said to be equivalent to drinking liquor. The worship of ghosts of brāhmaṇas, vampires, yakṣas and spirits is the means for men of reaching the very fierce hell, Kumbhīpāka.

97-106. Due to the worship of yakṣas and spirits all the religious merit earned during crores of existences by (performance of) sacrifices and (giving) gifts, is lost instantly. Due to the worship of yakṣas and spirits, a woman or a man becomes an insect for thousands of crores of kalpas and hundreds of crores

of kalpas and sinks in feces along with his dead ancestors. He who eats the food offered to yakṣas, goblins or vicious deities would be the eater of pus and blood. The brāhmaṇa (who eats food) assigned to yakṣas, hosts of spirits, cruel ghosts of brāhmaṇas, (would instantly become) a cāṇḍāla only. That woman who would worship yakṣas, goblins, serpents, demons, goes with her face turned down to the fierce Kālasūtra hell. One having lived there along with one's dead ancestors, and licking urine and feces till deluge, and with one's body being eaten by insects, is then born within ten days in hundred (śatasaṁkhyayā?) on the earth. Therefore, one should avoid the worship of yakṣas etc. and of (vicious) deities. One should even avoid an independent worship of brāhmaṇas well-versed in Vedas. Having worshipped god Nārāyaṇa Hari, venerable to the world, a man should worship the installation of the god covered on all sides. With the remnant of what is enjoyed by Viṣṇu, he should throw an offering to them.

107-115. The devotee of Viṣṇu should also perform a sacrifice with (materials) that have remained after it (i.e. Viṣṇu's worship). He should offer an oblation to the deities after having properly made an offering to Viṣṇu. He should also offer everything to his dead ancestors and should secure immortality. Harassing beings leads wise men to hell. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, know that which, without being given, is taken by men to be a theft and is the cause of hell. A man who eats prohibited articles of food like garlic, (drinks) liquor etc., (eats) radish, red garlic, sesamum-flour, pot-herb, bilva, kośātakī-fruit, bottle-gourd, egg-plant, bījāli-fruit, kavaca fruit, and other prohibited articles of food as noted in the holy texts, reaches a strange, inauspicious hell. The food of the non-devotees of Viṣṇu, that of the fallen, that which is not offered to Viṣṇu would be like the flesh of a dog. He who eats the food of (i.e. offered to) yakṣas, demons and spirits, so also (he who enjoys) wine, liquor and onion goes to a hell where the food is pus and blood. A man (goes to hell) by means of these—installing, touching or coming in contact with them. They too just go to a hell where the food is feces, urine and insects. So also a man (goes to hell) due to contact with the fallen and the heretics.

116-117. Knowing the ancient best Puruṣa (i.e. Viṣṇu), the

entire enjoyer of all sacrifices, a man should perform his daily and occasional obligatory rites, so also those that are performed through the desire for some object (optional). O goddess, those who desire heaven, should never worship yakṣas, demons, spirits, goblins and Bhairavas.

118-124. A brāhmaṇa should avoid worshipping yakṣas, demons and spirits. (For by doing so) for three hundred crores of kalpas he remains in the state of a goblin. Therefore, the worship of demons and spirits is prohibited. Due to the worship of yakṣas and groups of spirits he goes to the Raurava hell (and stays there) for thousands of crores of kalpas and hundreds of crores of kalpas. He, being without the marks like the conch, the disc and other marks most dear to Viṣṇu, and fallen from all pious acts would go to hell. By means of illicit intercourse, harm (to others), snatching another's wealth, by eating prohibited articles of food, he would instantly reach hell. (If) a man abandoning the woman whose hand he has sought, goes to another woman, that is illicit intercourse; it is the cause of instantly going to hell. A man similarly goes to hell only due to the contact with the fallen, the heretics and also those who do impious deeds. He should even avoid the contact of those who come in contact with such persons.

125. The devotee of Viṣṇu should avoid a family full of sins. Seeking solitude, he should abandon the village mixed with (i.e. full of) great sins.

126-131. Similarly, he who desires absolute solitude, should even abandon that region. The means to attain Viṣṇu is said to be doing one's own duty, having knowledge, devotion etc. That brāhmaṇa who practises his duties and knowledge in accordance with Viṣṇu's order, and is highly devoted to Viṣṇu, would be the one who solicits solitude. The devotee of Viṣṇu should properly avoid a prohibited act with a sinful thought (i.e. by looking upon it as a sinful act). Soliciting solitariness he should even mentally abandon (acts according to) the holy text due to blemish. Similarly he who desires absolute solitude, should avoid (acts) looking upon them as fit to be abandoned. Acts are said to be of three kinds: daily, occasional (both obligatory) and (those which are) performed through the desire for some object (i.e. optional).

The sages have declared knowledge also to be like that in the world: the discrimination between what ought and ought not to be done; thinking about the other world; the means to accomplish it; the knowledge of Viṣṇu's nature only. A devotee should be full of devotion. It is said to be of nine kinds:

132-140. The auspicious marks of Sudarśana (disc); the upright sectarian mark on the forehead; repeating the formula of (i.e. taught by) the good preceptor; worshipping Viṣṇu properly; recollection of Viṣṇu; glorification of Viṣṇu; service of the highest soul; salutation before him; and honouring those who belong to him; resorting to his favour and a holy place. (Thus) devotion is said to be of nine kinds. That with which the devotee of Viṣṇu seeks the shelter of god Viṣṇu, should be known as pious resignation. It is declared to be of three kinds: It is said to be of three types in the world: tāmasī (vicious), rājasī (passionate) and sāttvikī (sincere). Fulfilment is also divided into three (kinds); it is common to all (human) beings. Looking upon these four as fit to be abandoned(?), the devotee of Viṣṇu should give it(?) up. Brahman only, being the means, would cling to Viṣṇu's devotee(?). The best among the great devotees of Viṣṇu should practise acts, knowledge through love for the lord, and abandoning (i.e. not looking upon) them as means. With devotion he should worship Viṣṇu three times (a day). O you auspicious one, he should especially worship him at the time of an occasional obligatory (rite). On everyday of the month of Kārtika he should worship him (i.e. Viṣṇu) with jasmine flowers. He of a controlled mind and a firm vow, should continuously offer a lamp. Having fed brāhmaṇas he would, in the end, attain absorption into Viṣṇu.

141-145. O goddess, in Dhanu-month, he should every morning continuously worship the lord of gods with lotuses and white and black karavīra flowers. He should offer incense, lamps and eatables according to his capacity. At the conclusion he should feed brāhmaṇas who are the best among the great devotees of Viṣṇu. He undoubtedly gets the fruit of a thousand horse-sacrifices. In the month of Māgha, (every morning) when the sun has risen, he should particularly bathe in a river, and worship Viṣṇu with flowers and lotuses, O you of an auspicious face. He should offer rice cooked in milk and eatables with ghee

(to Viṣṇu). Having bathed (every morning) he should continuously worship Viṣṇu (everyday) for a month. In conclusion he should offer sugar with water.

146-151. O you of an auspicious appearance, he should devoutly honour Viṣṇu's devotees at the end of the month. Similarly in the month of Caitra he should daily worship the lord of the world with campaka flowers and also with bakula flowers; and should offer food prepared in jaggery. Being well concentrated, he should feed brāhmaṇas at the end of the month. He would (thus) obtain (the fruit of) the worship performed for a thousand years. In Vaiśākha he should worship the god with great lotuses having hundred petals. O goddess, having worshipped him in the proper manner, he should devoutly offer him water mixed with molasses along with curd, food and fruits. O Pārvatī, the lord of the world, along with Lakṣmī, is pleased. In the month of Jyeṣṭha, he, having worshipped Hṛṣīkeśa with white lotuses, trumpet(-flowers), and blue lotuses, and having devoutly offered him food with mangoes, he would be the giver of a crore of cows.

152-157. Having fed Viṣṇu's devotees, he would obtain complete immortality. In (the month of) Āṣāḍha he should everyday worship devoutly Acyuta, Lakṣmī's husband, and the god of gods with clove-flowers, and offer him rice boiled in milk. At the end of the month he should feed brāhmaṇas, the best among great devotees of Viṣṇu. Undoubtedly he obtains (the merit) of the worship for sixty thousand years. In the month of Śrāvaṇa he should worship Viṣṇu with punnāga flower, and ketakī petals. Having worshipped Viṣṇu with devotion, he would not obtain birth again. Devoutly he should give cakes mixed with sugar and ghee. He should feed brāhmaṇas; similarly he would obtain full immortality. In Śrāvaṇa he should worship the lord with kunda and kurabaka (flowers). He should devoutly offer milk and food mixed with jaggery. Everyday he would obtain the fruit of the gift of a crore of cows.

158-170. In the month of Āśvina he should worship Viṣṇu with blue lotuses. He should devoutly offer him milk mixed with cakes. Being delighted and surrounded by his own people, he reaches Viṣṇu's world for thousands of crores of kalpas and hundreds of crores of kalpas. O goddess, in the same way, in

the month of Kārtika he would obtain absorption (into Viṣṇu) on devoutly worshipping Acyuta with tender tulasī-leaves. With devotion, and in due order, he should devoutly and duly offer food with milk, ghee and sugar, so also rice boiled in milk and cakes. O you of an excellent face, one should, according to one's capacity, particularly worship Viṣṇu on the new-moon day, Saturday, constellation sacred to Viṣṇu, the Sun's passage, portentous calamity, and lunar or solar eclipse. The best brāhmaṇa should offer a sacrifice to Viṣṇu according to his capacity on the day of Jupiter's passage (from one to another constellation) and constellations of Viṣṇu's birth. He should offer a handful of flowers, approved by the Vedas, for every ṛc. He should also break the fast with the oblation of rice,[1] barley and pulse boiled for presentation to the gods and the manes, or with rice cooked in milk. He should feed Viṣṇu's devotees and give them presents according to his capacity. Having emancipated a crore of (the members of) his family, he would obtain Viṣṇu's position. If the best devotee of Viṣṇu is unable to worship Viṣṇu, he should, along with the repetition of hymns sacred to Viṣṇu,[2] everyday offer a sacrifice with a thousand handfuls of flowers. Or the wise man should worship the lord to please him (offering a handful of flowers) with every verse. Or continuously for seven nights he should (recite) the gem of a hymn one thousand and eight times, and should worship him with an offering. The wise man should especially honour the best among the great devotees of Viṣṇu. At the end he should, according to his wealth, take an ablution. A brāhmaṇa should take an ablution to the accompaniment of the repetition of hymns sacred to Viṣṇu.

171-174. The best brāhmaṇa, having duly and according to his capacity, bathed here, and having devoutly washed his feet in another vessel, should worship (Viṣṇu) with incense, flowers etc. and garments, ornaments etc; so also he should worship him with a tāmbūla, fruits according to his capacity. Having fed (a brāhmaṇa) with food, drink etc. and having repeatedly saluted him, he should follow him to the boundary (of the village), and having saluted him who is dismissed, he should again salute him

1. Caru: An oblation of rice, barley, and pulse boiled for presentation to the gods and the manes.

2. (Vaiṣṇava) anuvāka: repeating (hymns) sacred to Viṣṇu,

devoutly, and slowly return. With his mind controlled, he, having entered his house, should again worship the lord of beings.

175-179. Thus till he is alive, he should diligently worship Viṣṇu. O auspicious one, he should especially always honour those that belong to him. O goddess, of all worships that of Viṣṇu is the best. Therefore, honouring those that belong to him, is the best. He who would worship Viṣṇu, but would not honour those who belong to him should not be reckoned as Viṣṇu's devotee, but is known to be a hypocrite. Therefore, a man should always with (i.e. making an) effort honour those that belong to him. By means of honouring the best devotee of Viṣṇu, he overcomes the entire stream of difficulties. O goddess, thus I have described the excellent daily and occasional (obligatory) worship of Viṣṇu, so also that of those who belong to him.

180. O goddess, I have also described to you, his valour, nature, the accomplishment of the fruit, his residence, body so also the group of the four (kinds of) acts etc. What else do you desire to hear?

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED FIFTYFOUR

One Hundred and Eight Names of Rāma

Vasiṣṭha said:

1. That goddess, thus addressed by her lord, the Trident-holder, saluted the noble one, and with the palms of her hands joined, then spoke:

Pārvatī said:

2-3. O lord, you have well described the excellent practices of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, and the nature of the highest lord Viṣṇu, which is the greater secret than a secret (i.e. the greatest secret). O you saluted by all gods, I am fortunate; I am blessed. Due to your favour I (shall) worship the eternal lord of gods.

Vasiṣṭha said:

4. Then hearing her words Śiva, the destroyer of Tripura, with his heart pleased, embraced the goddess (and said):

Rudra said:

5-7. Well (said), well (said), O great goddess, O you of an excellent face. Worship Hṛṣīkeśa, Acyuta, the lord of Lakṣmī. O good one, with you as my wife, devoted to Viṣṇu, I am fortunate. O you of a beautiful body, permitted by your intelligent preceptor, Vāmadeva, worship the ancient lord, Viṣṇu. O you daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, by worshipping Viṣṇu in the way of (i.e. according to) the advice of the preceptor, a man obtains every desire (object), not otherwise.

Vasiṣṭha said:

8-9. The goddess, thus addressed, and being delighted and desirous of worshipping Viṣṇu, then suddenly approached Vāmadeva, O king. The goddess, after approaching, honouring the preceptor and saluting the best sage with the palms of her hands joined, said (to him):

Pārvatī said:

10. O revered one, O best brāhmaṇa, by your grace I shall properly worship Viṣṇu. Please permit me.

Vasiṣṭha said:

11-12. Thus addressed by the goddess, the preceptor, the great sage Vāmadeva, duly gave her an excellent mystic formula. The best sage told (her) the thousand names of Viṣṇu. The preceptor, after telling her the manner of worship, also spoke with great love to Pārvatī who had fulfilled her vow.

Vāmadeva said:

13. O you of an excellent face, having everyday worshipped Viṣṇu in the morning, repeat the thousand names of Viṣṇu after that.

Vasiṣṭha said:

14-16. Pārvatī who was advised by that preceptor Vāma-

deva, thus addressed by that preceptor, worshipped (Viṣṇu) with her mind delighted, saluted (him), and again came to her abode. Then after a few days, the bull-bannered Śaṅkara, having worshipped Viṣṇu on a Dvādaśī-day, was seated on a charming peak of Kailāsa. He then spoke to Pārvatī to take food.

Śaṅkara said:

17a. O Pārvatī, saluted by the world, come to eat with me.

Vasiṣṭha said:

17b-18. Goddess Pārvatī said to him: "O god, I shall eat after I repeat the thousand names (of Viṣṇu). O lord, you may eat food." Then the highest lord, smiling, said to her:

Śaṅkara said:

19-22a. O Pārvatī, you are fortunate; you are blessed. You are Viṣṇu's devotee. O goddess, without good luck, devotion to Viṣṇu is difficult to have. O you charming one, O you of an excellent face, I, saying 'Rāma, Rāma', am interested in Rāma. Rāma's name is equal to the thousand names (of Viṣṇu). O Pārvatī, my mind, hearing the names beginning with (the letter) 'ra', becomes pleased, due to the expectation of their being Rāma's names. O great goddess, uttering (the word) *Rāma*, now eat with me.

Vasiṣṭha said:

22b-23. Then uttering the name *Rāma* Pārvatī ate with (Śaṅkara). Then the great goddess Pārvatī, seated with Śaṅkara, uttered the name *Rāma*, and with her mind disposed to love, asked god Śaṅkara:

Pārvatī said:

24. You said Rāma's name is equivalent to the thousand names (of Viṣṇu). The enemy of Rāvaṇa has other names (also). O lord of gods, tell them to me. Devotion (for them) has arisen in me.

Śrī Mahādeva said:

25-29. O Pārvatī, listen. I shall tell the names of Rāma. O

Pārvatī, whatever common and Vaidika words are there, they are Rāmacandra's names. Among them the (Viṣṇu-)sahasra (-nāma) is superior; and among them the hundred and eight names (told) below are chief. Just one name of Viṣṇu is said to be superior to all Vedas; so also are the thousand names equal to Rāma's names. O dear one, that fruit which one who recites the hymns of all Vedas, gets is obtained crorefold by Rāma's name only. O you of an auspicious appearance, listen to the principal names of Rāma. O dear one, I shall tell you those which are sung by the sages:

30-47. Om, Śrīrāma; Rāmacandra; the eternal Rāmabhadra; the lotus-eyed one; the glorious lord of kings; the best among the Raghus; the lord of Jānakī; the conqueror; the victorious one; Janārdana; the one dear to Viśvāmitra; the controlled one; the one who is exclusively devoted to the protection of those who have sought his shelter; the destroyer of Vālin; the eloquent one; the truth-speaking one; the one of genuine valour; the one true to his word; the one getting the fruit of his vow; always the resort of Hanūmat; the son of Kauśalyā; the destroyer of Khara; skilled in killing Virādha; the protector of Bibhīṣaṇa; the one who cut off the head of Rāvaṇa; the breaker of seven tālas; the one who broke Śiva's bow; the one who broke down the great pride of (Paraśurāma) the son of Jamadagni; the one who killed Tāḍakā; the one who mastered Vedānta; the soul of the Vedas; the only medicine for the bondage to the mundane existence; the enemy of Dūṣaṇa and Triśiras; the one having three forms; having three qualities and (of the form of the) triad (i.e. the three Vedas); the one having three strides; the soul of the three worlds; the one whose acts are said to be meritorious; the protector of the three worlds; the archer; the one who lived in Daṇḍaka forest; the one who sanctified Ahalyā; the one devoted to his parents; the one who grants boons; the one who has controlled his senses and anger, his greed; and who is the preceptor of the world; the one who associated himself with bears and monkeys; the one who resorted to Citrakūṭa; the one who gave the boon of protection of Jayanta; and the one who was served by Sumitrā's son; the one who is the superior lord of all gods; the one who brought the dead monkeys back to life; the killer of the deceitful Mārīca; the one who is illustrious; and who has

large arms; the one who is praised by all gods; who is gentle; who is friendly; who is the best sage; who is a great meditating saint; who is very generous; the one who gave a stable kingdom to Sugrīva; the one who is said to give greater fruit than (one due to) all religious merit; who destroys all sins; the one who is the first god; and also the greatest god; the one who is the dawn of good fortune; who has great strength; who is the ancient and best Puruṣa (the Supreme Being); the one who has a smiling face; who speaks measured words; who speaks first; (who is called) Rāghava; the one who is grave with infinite virtues; who is wise and uncommon due to the quality of control; who does human acts due to his Māyā (illusory power); the one who is honoured by Mahādeva (i.e. Śiva); the one who constructed the bridge; the one who vanquished the Ocean; who is full of all holy places; who is Viṣṇu; whose body is dark, handsome, brave; who wears yellow garments; who is an archer; who is the lord of all sacrifices; who (himself) is the sacrifice; who is free from old age and death; the one who installed Śiva's Phallus; who is free from primitive qualities; the one who is the highest lord; who is the highest Brahman; who has the body of consciousness and joy; who is the highest light; the one who is the highest abode; the highest sky; and the higher than the high; who is the highest lord; who has gone to the other side; who is the opposite bank; who is of the nature of all souls; is auspicious. These are the hundred and eight names of Śri Rāmacandra.

48-51. O goddess, I have told you this secret of secrets through love for you. He who would recite or listen to these (names) with a devoted heart, is freed from all sins (committed) even during crores of kalpas. Watery places turn into dry grounds, and foes become friends. Kings become servants, and fires become mild. Spirits become favourable, and unstable wealth becomes stable for the man who recites them devoutly; so also planets become favourable; calamities are removed, of the man who recites (them) devoutly, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain.

52-57. He who would recite it with great devotion, has the three worlds under his control. By narrating (them) he obtains whatever object he desires. With five ancestors and five successors, he always delights in Vaikuṇṭha for thousands of crores of

kalpas, and hundreds of crores of kalpas. Those men who praise Rāma who is dark like dūrvā-blades, who is lotus-eyed, who has put on yellow garments, with divine names, are not worldly spirits. Salutation to Rāma, Rāmabhadra, Rāmacandra, the Creator, to Raghunātha, to the lord, and the husband of Sītā. O goddess, a man, repeating this hymn day and night, is free from all sins, and would obtain absorption into Viṣṇu. O you having beautiful brows, through love for you I have thus told you Rāma's greatness contained in the Vedas and called auspicious.

Vasiṣṭha said:

58-59a. Having heard that greatness of the highest lord told by Śaṅkara, she, with her eyes full of tears of joy, obtained incomparable delight. Having saluted her husband, the bull-bannered, lord of gods.

Pārvatī said:

59b-60. Oh, matchless is the greatness of Rāma, the highest soul. Even (after hearing it) for hundreds of kalpas my ears would not be satisfied. I am fortunate: I am blessed. O sinless one, you have told me everything. May I have, through your grace, devotion for Rāma in every existence.

Vasiṣṭha said:

61-69. Speaking like this, Pārvatī, the best devotee of Viṣṇu, lived happily in all conditions with her husband on the Kailāsa mountain, repeating the formula: 'Salutation to Rāma, Rāmabhadra, Rāmacandra, the Creator, to Raghunātha, the lord, the husband of Sītā.' O king, I have told you all this topmost secret. O king the religious treatises proclaimed by Rudra are vicious (*tāmasa*). The bull-bannered (god) narrated them for deluding people. Lord Śiva told this one in private to the goddess. The lord, highly devoted to her, told the goddess this significant gist of the hymn, with a hidden meaning, through love for her, O king. He who would listen to or recite with a mind full of devotion, this wonderful dialogue between Umā and the great Lord, would be an omniscient and great devotee of Viṣṇu. Being free from all practices, he obtains the highest position. O very mighty lord of

kings, in your dynasty Viṣṇu, the propitious highest lord will be born as Daśaratha's son for the good of all people. Therefore, the Ikṣvākus, among whom lord Rāma, of lotus-like eyes, is born, are honoured even by gods, O king.

CHAPTER TWO HUNDRED FIFTYFIVE

The Three Gods Subjected to Test by Bhṛgu

Dilīpa said:

1-6. O brāhmaṇa, you have fully told (me) about all the practices, and about the general and particular nature of the highest (lord) and the individual soul. O best brāhmaṇa, through curiosity I am asking you one other (question). Due to your great love (for me) properly tell (i.e. answer) that also. Rudra, the destroyer of Tripura, is the best among the great devotees of Viṣṇu. Due to what did he, along with his wife, have a condemned form? How did the very illustrious one have the form of clitoris? O best brāhmaṇa, how did the five-faced one, four-armed one, trident-holder and three-eyed one have a condemned form? O son of Mitra-Varuṇa, tell all this (to me).

Vasiṣṭha said:

7-13. O king, listen; I shall explain to you what you have asked me respectfully. In the pure hearts of men a thought for bliss is produced. Formerly on the best mountain Mandara Svāyambhuva Manu performed, along with sages, an excellent prolonged sacrificial session. There came all sages who had fulfilled their vows, who were proficient in various holy texts, whose lustre was like that of the young sun and fire, who, the brāhmaṇas, were well-versed in all Vedas, and who had mastered all religious practices. When the great sacrificial session took place, the sages whose sins had been exhausted, and who had penance as their wealth, spoke among themselves in order to find the truth about the deity. Which excellent deity should be honoured by brāhmaṇas proficient in the Vedas? Who, out of Brahmā, Viṣṇu

and Śiva, being praised, gives salvation to men? Water of (i.e. flowing from) whose feet should be resorted to? So also the purifying remnant of whose food should be enjoyed? Who, the immutable one, is the highest abode, the highest soul and who is eternal? Whose favour and holy place would gratify the manes?

14-20. Such a great discussion took place among those who were seated. Some great sages said: "Rudra alone (is the greatest deity)." Other best sages said: "Brahmā alone is fit to be worshipped." Other best one said that the Sun alone was fit to be worshipped among the souls. Other brāhmaṇas said: "The immutable lotus-eyed Vāsudeva, the highest one, the one without a beginning or an end (viz.) Viṣṇu alone is the highest lord. He, the best among the deities, deserves to be worshipped." To them, who were discussing, Svāyambhuva Manu said: "He, the lord, who is full of good nature, who has auspicious qualities, who is lotus-eyed, who is glorious, who is the lord of Lakṣmī, who is the highest Brahman, is the only lord adored by brāhmaṇas, proficient in Vedas. Others mixed with passion and vice are not fit to be worshipped." Having heard these words of him, all the great sages, joining the palms of their hands, said to the brāhmaṇa, Bhṛgu, the treasure of penance:

The sages said:

21-25. O you of a good vow, you are able to remove our doubt. Approach, O you of a good vow, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa. O sage, go near them and observe their bodies. Out of them, he who possesses the pure sattvaguṇa, is alone fit to be worshipped, and never anyone else. He, full of pure sattva, will be friendly to brāhmaṇas. To brāhmaṇas he will be a holy place and a favour. Even to deities and manes the remnants of his food will be purifying. Therefore, O best sage, go to the residence of gods. O lord, O best sage, quickly bring about the welfare of all people.

26-27. Thus addressed, the best sage, along with Vāmadeva, quickly went to Kailāsa where the bull-bannered (god) lived. Having gone near the door of the house of the magnanimous Śaṅkara and seeing very fierce Nandin with a spear in his hand, he said (to him):

28-34. "I, the brāhmaṇa Bhṛgu, have come to see Hara, the

best god. Quickly announce me (i.e. my arrival) to the magnanimous Śaṅkara." Hearing the words of him, Nandin, the lord of (Śiva's) attendants spoke harsh words to the great sage of an unlimited splendour: "The lord is not in the vicinity. Śaṅkara is sporting with goddess (Pārvatī). O best sage, go back if you desire to live." Thus repudiated by him the (sage) of a great penance remained there, at the door of the great lord, for many days. "Since he, arrogant due to the company of a woman, thinks lightly of me, he shall have the form of clitoris. Approached (i.e. overcome) by vice he slights me, a brāhmaṇa! Reduced to an impious state, he will not be adored by brāhmaṇas. Therefore, all the food, water, flowers and oblations offered to him will undoubtedly be useless."

35-40. The very lustrous one, having thus cursed Śaṁkara honoured by the world, said to the very fierce attendant, Nandin, holding a spear, O king: "May Śiva's devotees, having ash, phallus and bones be impious and out of the Vedic fold." The sage, having thus cursed Rudra, Tripura's killer, went to Brahmā's world, respected by all people. The very intelligent one, having seen Brahmā, saluted him by joining the palms of his hands. The great ascetic, having saluted him, remained silent before him. Seeing the best sage, Brahmā, possessed of an abundance of rajas did not honour him, the great sage that had approached him. He also did not rise to honour him, nor did he speak pleasing words.

41-45. The lotus-seated (Brahmā) remained there with great majesty. Seeing him with preponderance of rajas, the great sage, the grandsire of all worlds, who was very lustrous, said (these) words to Brahman: "Since you, having preponderance of rajas, are slighting me, therefore, be dishonoured by all people." Bhṛgu, the brāhmaṇa, having thus cursed the magnanimous Brahmā, respected by the world, suddenly went to Viṣṇu's residence. The brāhmaṇa, having entered Viṣṇu's world on the northern coast of the Milky Ocean, and being properly honoured there by the glorious ones remaining there, and not being stopped there, entered the inner apartment.

46-52. Having entered that spotless palace, resembling the sun, he saw Lakṣmī's lord lying on the bed of the serpent. Both his feet were being rubbed by the lotus-like hands of Lakṣmī.

Seeing him, the best sage Bhṛgu, full of anger kicked with his left foot Viṣṇu's chest. The lord, getting up quickly, and gladly saying, "I am fortunate", joyfully pressed his foot with his hands. Slowly stroking his feet he spoke (these) sweet words: "O brāhmaṇa-sage, I am fortunate. I am always blessed. Due to the contact of your foot, there will be propitiousness in my body. May the dust-particles from the foot of a brāhmaṇa, which are the cause of the acquisition of affluence, which are the comets to the host of calamities that have come up, which are bridges over the boundless ocean of the mundane existence, purify me. All the holy places like Gaṅgā etc. undoubtedly remain in the body of him, on whose body dust-particles from a brāhmaṇa's foot always remain."

53-54. Saying so and quickly getting up with goddess (Lakṣmī), Viṣṇu devoutly honoured him with divine garlands, sandal etc. Having seen him, the best sage, with his eyes full of tears of joy, got from the best seat, and saluted that treasure of compassion. The great ascetic, having joined the palms of his hands, gladly said:

Śrī Bhṛgu said:

55-64. Oh, what a (handsome) form! Oh, (great) tranquillity! Oh, (great) knowledge! Oh, (great) pity! Oh, his patience is spotless! Oh, the goodness of Viṣṇu! Similarly the ocean of virtues has natural, auspicious, goodness. It is not at all present in all other gods. You alone are hospitable to the brāhmaṇas. You alone are the protector. You alone are the highest Brahman. You alone are the lord of brāhmaṇas. No other god is respectable. O Puruṣottama, those who worship any other god than you, have become impious, and are censured by all the world. You, Janārdana, are alone fit to be worshipped by brāhmaṇas, well-versed in the Vedas. None else among the gods is ever venerable. Brahmā, Rudra and others, mixed with rajas and tamas are not fit to be worshipped. You, having pure sattva, are fit to be worshipped by brāhmaṇas. The water (flowing) from your feet should be resorted to by manes, gods, and all brāhmaṇas. It gives salvation, and destroys sins. Manes, gods, brāhmaṇas should take what is left over after you have eaten, and not what is left over after others have eaten. The food, flowers, so also water of

(i.e. offered to) other gods, would all be unfit to be touched. It is useless like liquor. Therefore, a wise brāhmaṇa should constantly worship you, the eternal one, everyday and should take water of (i.e. sanctified by) you and food eaten by you.

65-68. A brāhmaṇa should not see another god; should not worship him. He should not partake of another god's favour; should not enter the sanctuary of any other (god). (If) a man does not give in this world the food and holy water enjoyed by you in the rite of śrāddha offered to his ancestors, all that would be fruitless. His dead ancestors fall into (and live in) the hell of pus and blood for thousands of crores of kalpas and hundreds of crores of kalpas. O master, when one offers an oblation (into fire) or gives (offerings) to deities and manes after offering them to you, there is satisfaction (of deities and manes), (i.e. he satisfies them) and he gets immortality.

69-78a. Therefore, you alone are adorable to gods, and none else. He who, through folly, would worship other (deities) will be impious. You are Nārāyaṇa; you are glorious; you are the ancient Vāsudeva. You are omnipresent Viṣṇu. You are eternal, highest soul and the great god. You alone are fit to be worshipped by brāhmaṇas. You are hospitable to brāhmaṇas. You possess pure sattva. Due to your being venerable to brāhmaṇas and due to your virtue of having pure sattva, obtain the status of a brāhmaṇa among all the gods themselves; for all brāhmaṇas will resort to you, the highest Brahman, alone. They were brāhmaṇas and not others. There is no doubt about this. Devakī's son is holy. Madhusūdana is holy. The lotus-eyed one is holy. Viṣṇu, Acyuta is holy. Lord Kṛṣṇa is holy. Vāsudeva, Acyuta, Hari (is holy). Narasiṁha is holy. So also is the immutable Nārāyaṇa. Śrīdhara, Śrīśa, Govinda, Vāmana is holy. The Yajñavarāha, Keśava, Puruṣottama is holy. Glorious, lotus-eyed Rāma, descendant of Raghu, is holy. Padmanābha is holy. So also Dāmodara, the lord, Mādhava, Yajña, lord Trivikrama is holy. Hṛṣīkeśa is holy; Janārdana, wearing yellow garments (is holy).

78b-87. Salutation to the holy god, to Vāsudeva, holder of the Śārṅga (bow); (Salutation) to Nārāyaṇa, Śrīśa, having lotus-like eyes. Salutation to the holy god, Vāsudeva, Viṣṇu. Salutation to the highest god full of auspicious qualities. Salutation to

the holy god, of the form of all gods. Salutation to you having the body of the Boar. Salutation to you, the lord of the triad (of the Vedas). Salutation to the holy god, lying on the bed of the serpent. Repeated salutations to Rāghava having eyes like lotus-petals. O lord, all gods and sages, deluded by Māyā, do not know you, the lord of all worlds and a great soul. O revered one, even all those proficient in the Vedas do not know you by your name, form and qualities and your acts difficult to be performed. I, capable of knowing your sattva, suggesting your superiority, have been sent by the great sages; (and therefore) I have approached you. O Keśava, in order to know your character and qualities, I put my foot on your chest. O Govinda, O treasure of pity, forgive it.

Speaking like this, and repeatedly saluting Viṣṇu, and being honoured there by the divine, magnanimous, great sages, Bhṛgu, with his mind delighted, again went to the place of sacrifice having an auspicious name.

88-93. The great sages, having seen the magnanimous one to have come back, rose, saluted him, and duly worshipped him. The best sage told them all that: "O best sages, Brahmā and Śiva, the best sages have preponderance of the qualities of rajas and tamas. They were cursed by me. They are not fit to be worshipped by brāhmaṇas. Śaṁkara enveloped by tamas was cursed by me on the peak of Kailāsa. Viṣṇu full of pure sattva is the ocean of auspicious qualities. Nārāyaṇa is the highest Brahman. (He i.e.) Viṣṇu is the deity of brāhmaṇas. Śrīpati, Viṣṇu, Vāsudeva, Janārdana is holy. Govinda, Hari, Acyuta of lotus-like eyes is holy. O best men, he alone is fit to be worshipped by brāhmaṇas, and none else.

94-97. He who, through folly, would worship another (god) will be impious. Even sinners get salvation just by remembering Kṛṣṇa. The water (flowing) from his feet should be taken. The remnants of the food (offered to) him are purifying. It gives heaven and salvation to men, especially to brāhmaṇas. (A man) should everyday offer an oblation which is (first) offered to Viṣṇu, to the gods. He should also offer it to his dead ancestors. (Then) he gets complete immortality. O brāhmaṇas, the dead ancestors of him who does not offer (food) enjoyed by Viṣṇu,

to them at a śrāddha-rite, always eat (and drink) feces and urine.

98-101. Therefore, brāhmaṇas should always eat the remnants of the food offered to Viṣṇu. The remnants (of food offered to other gods) are useless and (therefore) condemned. A brāhmaṇa, weak in knowledge, who even once eats the remnants of food etc. offered to Śaṅkara etc., would certainly be a cāṇḍāla. For thousands of crores of kalpas he is roasted in the fire in hell. O best brāhmaṇas, the remnants of offerings to gods like Rudra, are said to be equal to food offered to demons, yakṣas, goblins and like liquor and flesh. Brāhmaṇas should not eat that food, the offering enjoyed by (these) gods.

102. Therefore, O best brāhmaṇas, leaving another god, worship diligently, till you live, the ancient Viṣṇu only.

103-109. With your doubts removed, endowed with the five purifications like imprinting the body with heated marks, with good hearts, looking upon that as the highest abode of Viṣṇu, properly worship that extraordinary Viṣṇu, O best brāhmaṇas. The brāhmaṇas marked with the disc(-impression) are good and extraordinary. Those without the disc-marks are said to be ordinary and vicious. Therefore, a man should have the heated marks of a disc and a conch at the roots of his arms, which (marks) of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu burn the stream of sins due to contact with ordinary persons. Having had the upright sectarian marks on the body according to the manner prescribed in the holy texts, he should worship Viṣṇu according to the rules with the gem of the hymn (viz. Viṣṇu-sahasranāma). Being diligent he should also partake of the remnants of food offered to him. He should always worship gods at the time of finishing his worship. O brāhmaṇas, knowing him to be the highest lord enjoying all sacrifices, one should always offer (oblations into fire), give (presents to him) and mutter (his names)."

Vasiṣṭha said:

110. All the sages, thus addressed, and with their sins exhausted, saluted Bhṛgu and with the palms of their hands duly joined, said:

The sages said:

111-112. O revered best brāhmaṇa, you alone remove our

doubts. You are the refuge of the people. O brāhmaṇa, you are the highest asylum. You alone are the best piety. You alone are the highest penance. We shall exist due to your favour, and not otherwise, O brāhmaṇa.

Vasiṣṭha said:

113-117. All the great sages, having thus praised that brāhmaṇa Bhṛgu, and having got the hymn from him, worshipped Viṣṇu. O best king, I have told all this to you as the occasion has arisen. O best king, due to the touch of the lotus-like hand of Rāma the entire form condemned by the world will be spotless. Rāghava, the highest Brahman, is the purifier among all gods. Touched and seen by him all these, Śaṁkara and others, become spotless. Viṣṇu, the ocean of the virtue of affection, is the father, the mother of all gods. He is also the protector of all people. If you desire the highest position, then seek his shelter only.

118. O king, I have told you the entire Purāṇa, acceptable to the Vedas, and narrated by Brahmā in the age of Svāyambhuva Manu.

119-125. This account, (causing) liberation, of Viṣṇu should be told to the one modest due to devotion for Viṣṇu and having pure sattva, and not otherwise (i.e. to none else). The reader (or reciter) of this should have the marks of a conch, a disc, an upright sectarian mark etc. It should always be heard from his mouth. (Then only) you will have a son. Not otherwise. In him who, being well-composed, would recite to others or read (for himself) this (Purāṇa), is always produced undivided devotion for Viṣṇu. A student obtains knowledge; one seeking religious merit obtains it. One seeking salvation obtains it. One desiring enjoyment gets happiness. A man, full of devotion, should read it on the twelfth day, when the Sun is in the Śravaṇā (constellation), on a Saṁkrānti day, or at an eclipse, or on the full-moon day or the new-moon day. He who, being composed, reads half a verse or a quarter of it, undoubtedly obtains the fruit of a thousand horse-sacrifices. I have thus narrated to you this Purāṇa-text. Worship Viṣṇu if you desire the highest position.

Sūta said:

126-127. The best king (Dilīpa), thus addressed by his preceptor Vasiṣṭha, saluted and duly honoured him. Having properly received the hymn from the best brāhmaṇa, and having, till the end of his life, diligently worshipped Viṣṇu, he reached, in (due) time, the ancient position of Viṣṇu, fit to be reached by meditating saints.

VII KRIYĀYOGASĀRAKHAṆḌA

(Section on Essence of Yoga by Works)

CHAPTER ONE

A Dialogue between Jaimini and Vyāsa

Salutation to Śrī Gaṇeśa. Now is commenced the Kriyāyogasārakhaṇḍa.

1. We devoutly, constantly salute the pair of the lotus-like feet of Lakṣmī's lord, which is crowned with the bees of the heads that are bowing down, of the line of the gods like Brahmā, which very much nourishes the mass of the exquisite beauty of the lakes of the minds of the meditating saints, which has the mass of the drops of the honey of the water of Gaṅgā, and which removes the afflictions of the mundane existence.

2. Salutation to that god Viṣṇu who, the lord, taking up various forms protects the entire world, those who are highly devoted to worshipping whose feet never plunge into the universal ocean, of whom, the residence is continuously in the lotus-like hearts of all living beings, and who takes up the form of a hog.

3. I salute this (Viṣṇu) along with Lakṣmī, who, the god, spoke in the form of Vyāsa in (i.e. through) the Purāṇa the practices after having taken them out from the Vedas for the good of the world.

4-6. Once all sages, desiring the good of the world, had an interesting chat in the very charming Naimiṣāraṇya. In the meanwhile, Sūta, the very lustrous and glorious disciple of Vyāsa, came there recollecting Viṣṇu. All ascetics like Śaunaka, seeing Sūta, master of the meaning of holy texts, coming there, rose and saluted him.

7-9. He, the best among those who know religious practices, also suddenly and devoutly saluted, (after prostrating himself) like a staff on the ground, the sages, the great devotees of Viṣṇu. Surrounded by all the groups of his disciples, the very intelligent

one sat among the sages on an excellent seat offered by the best sages. Śaunaka, the best sage, full of modesty and joining the palms of his hands, said these words to him, seated there:

Śaunaka said:

10-12. O Sūta, O revered one, O omniscient great sage, by what means would men have great devotion for Viṣṇu when the Kali age has arrived? In the Kali (age) all men will be engaged in doing sins; will be devoid of Vedic learning. How would they achieve their (spiritual) good? In the Kali (age) man's life is dependent on food. Similarly people are short-lived. So also they will be poor and troubled by various miseries.

13-16. O brāhmaṇa, whatever good act is told in the holy texts is accomplished with effort. Therefore, men will not at all do acts in the Kali (age). The wicked-hearted ones will, along with members of their families, meet with destruction when good acts have vanished (and) sinful acts have commenced. O best one, O son of Sūta, tell how great religious merit would be possible with very small exertion, little wealth and within a short time. It is decided in the holy texts that he, due to whose advice, men perform (acts of) sin or (of) virtue, would partake of (the fruits of) them.

17-20. The four—givers of good advice, the kind ones, those free from deceitfulness and those opposing the sinful way—are comparable to Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu of the form of knowledge does not look pleasingly at him who, having obtained knowledge in the mundane existence, does not give it to others. That man, delighting others by means of gems of knowledge and (other) gems, should be known as very intelligent and as Viṣṇu having a human form. O best sage, you have mastered the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas. There is no other teacher than you, since you are taught by Vyāsa.

Sūta said:

21-24a. O best sage, you are fortunate. You alone are the chief of Viṣṇu's devotees, since you always desire the good of the people. O Śaunaka, listen. For the good of all the people, especially for that of Viṣṇu's devotees, I shall tell you what you desired to hear. Listen to all that (Vyāsa) said when asked by

Jaimini. The great sage Jaimini, always engaged in the practice of abstract meditation, bowing his head, saluted Vyāsa.

Jaimini said:

24b-25a. O revered one, O you who know all religious practices, O son of Satyavatī, tell me from the beginning by what means salvation would be (obtained) in Kali (age).

Sūta said:

25b. O best sage, hearing the words of Jaimini, Vyāsa, with his mind pleased, commenced the propitious tale:

Vyāsa said:

26a-33a. O Jaimini, O best sage, O very intelligent one, you are fortunate, since you always desire to listen to the story of Viṣṇu. Whosoever has a mind to listen to a good story, would have knowledge; and they look upon knowledge as giving salvation. The creator has in vain made the earth to have a burden by creating him, the sinner, who does not like the story of Viṣṇu. The devotees of Viṣṇu are proud of narrating Viṣṇu's tale on the earth. O best sage, that day on which the story of Viṣṇu is not heard, is a bad day, and not that day which is covered with clouds. The lord never abandons being present there on whichever portion of the earth the story of Viṣṇu exists (i.e. is narrated). Having cursed the man who brings in an obstacle when the story of Viṣṇu is commenced, the lord, along with deities goes (away).

33b-38. Those men who are delighted on hearing the glory of Viṣṇu, should be known as portions of gods. They, the best ones, should be looked upon as fit to be honoured. Those men who on hearing the story of Viṣṇu, laugh at (it), should be known as portions of demons. They partake of (i.e. live in) hell. O best brāhmaṇa, at that place where Viṣṇu's story which removes the sinful ailments of the people that listen to it, is (told) everyday, all the holy places like Gaṅgā, the divine sages, deities, sages having penance as their wealth, stay. O sage, listen to this Essence of the Yoga by Works which is very significant and which destroys sins, along with the story of Viṣṇu and Itihāsa.

CHAPTER TWO

Characteristic Marks of a Vaiṣṇava

Vyāsa said:

1-7. At the beginning of the creation great Viṣṇu (Mahā-viṣṇu), desiring to create the entire world, turned himself into three forms—creator, protector and destroyer. The Supreme Being produced from the right side of his body, himself, called Brahmā, for creating this world. O sage, then the lord of the world produced from the left portion (of his body), his portion viz. Viṣṇu, for the protection of the world. The lord who had taken his abode in a lotus, produced from the middle part of his body the imperishable Rudra for the destruction of the world. Some describe the god having the three qualities rajas, sattva and tamas as Brahmā, some as Viṣṇu and some as Śaṅkara. Viṣṇu (who is) one (only), dividing himself into three, creates, devours and protects (the world). Therefore, the best people should not differentiate among the three in the worlds. The original Prakṛti (Nature) of the great Viṣṇu, the highest soul, which is the cause of the universe of beings is described as (consisting of) Vidyā (knowledge) and Avidyā (ignorance).

8-9. She (Prakṛti), of the form of existence and non-existence, is eternal, and is the cause of the world. She suddenly had three forms, Brāhmī, Lakṣmī, Ambikā. O sage, then having appointed (this) original (Nature) to create, maintain and destroy (the world), the first Highest Being vanished there only.

10-17. By his order Brahmā then, with concentration, produced the five gross elements—earth, ether, air, water and fire. The lotus-seated one also produced (the seven worlds) like Bhūr, Bhuvar, Svar, Mahas, Jana, Tapas and Satya (above the earth). O brāhmaṇa, then Brahmā created the (nether) worlds in this order: Atala, then Vitala below it, Sutala below it, Talātala still below, Mahātala below it, then Rasātala below it, and Pātāla below it. At the centre of the earth he produced the great mountain (viz. Meru) with jewelled peaks and bright like gold for the residence of the deities. He produced Mandara, the western mountain, Trikūṭa, Udaya and also various other mountains. Then he produced the Lokāloka mountain; and the highest lord,

Brahmā, produced the seven oceans and the seven islands in between, O best brāhmaṇa. O best brāhmaṇa, (there is) Jambūdvīpa, (then there is) the dvīpa called Plakṣa. It is double (the size of) it (i.e. Jambūdvīpa). (The dvīpa) Śālmalī is double (the size of) it (i.e. Plakṣa).

18-20. These dvīpas (islands) like Plakṣa etc. have all divisions, have all qualities and are forms of deities and divine sages. O brāhmaṇa, these seven islands are surrounded by seven oceans: I shall narrate the names of the oceans. Listen: Lavaṇa, Ikṣu, Surā, Sarpi, Dadhi, Dugdha and Jala. O divine sage, these oceans are to the east and west.

21-22. The mountains like Lokāloka should be known to be double (in size). O best brāhmaṇa, then Brahmā produced in every island trees, bushes, creepers etc., so also the lower animals, and gods, human beings, nāgas, and vidyādharas also.

23-28. Then in due order he created his sons, the sages like Dakṣa, so also brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras. The lord also produced their livelihood etc. They call that Bhārata giving auspicious and inauspicious fruits, which lies to the south of the Hema mountain and to the north of the Vindhya mountain. All the best men who obtain a birth in Bhārata country, and do religious practices are like Viṣṇu. O best one, people enjoy (or suffer) the fruit in the land of an auspicious or an inauspicious act performed in the land of actions. There is none else like him in the three worlds, who, having come to the land of actions, is engaged in pious acts. His birth is fruitful and he has well lived his life.

29-30. He who has no inclination to the service of Viṣṇu (has lived in vain). Firm devotion to Viṣṇu, the god of gods, the only lord of the mundane existence, is produced in men by means of religious merit earned during crores of existences. He is the giver of all happiness; he is praiseworthy and fearless.

31-33. That country where a devotee of Viṣṇu does not stay should be abandoned. A small or great sin committed during previous existence, perishes that moment only when the devotee of Viṣṇu is seen. What is the use of a bath in Gaṅgā to him who would devoutly have the water (flowing) from the feet of a devotee of Viṣṇu, that removes all sins, on his head?

34-40a. He who associates himself with Viṣṇu's devotees

even for a short time is freed from all sins among which a brāhmaṇa's murder is prominent. O best brāhmaṇa, all those religious acts that are performed before a devotee of Viṣṇu are protective. That place where Viṣṇu's devotees stay for a while is, to speak the truth, a holy place, a penance-grove. O brāhmaṇa, that gift like food, water, fruit, whichever is given to Viṣṇu's devotee would be inexhaustible. The devotee of Viṣṇu is said to be of the form of all deities. If a man has pleased him, then all deities are pleased in this very fierce worldly existence, full of various afflictions. A man who is a devotee of Viṣṇu never sinks. Therefore, O best brāhmaṇa, you too, having always devoutly propitiated Viṣṇu by the Yoga in the form of deeds, go to the highest position of Viṣṇu.

Sūta said:

40b-41a. Having heard these words of the magnanimous Vyāsa, Jaimini, putting the palms of his hands on his head, said:

Jaimini said:

41b-43a. O preceptor, you have repeatedly told the greatness of Viṣṇu's devotees. Now tell me everything—what are their characteristics, and, O best sage, how should Viṣṇu's devotees be recognised? Tell me all that from the beginning, if you favour me.

Vyāsa said:

43b-45. Listen to what the lord who was asked by the creator himself, had said when Madhu and Kaiṭabha were killed. I know it. Having, in the form of Rudra, destroyed the entire world at the end of a kalpa, the lord all alone slept by his magical power born of Yoga (Yogamāyā). When the lord had, under the influence of Yoganidrā,[1] slept, the entire earth, was plunged in the mass of water.

46-49. Then Brahmā, the creator of the world, with his mind devoted to him (i.e. Viṣṇu), meditated upon that first god and remained on his lotus-like navel. O brāhmaṇa, at that very fierce time two fierce, very great demons, named Madhu and

1. Sleep personified as a goddess and said to be a form of Durgā.

Kaiṭabha were produced from the excretion of wax from Viṣṇu's ear. The two very fierce demons moving in the air, saw Brahmā on the lotus-like navel of Śrī Viṣṇu. O brāhmaṇa, the two very mighty and brave demons, with their eyes red with anger exerted to kill him.

50-51. Then Brahmā, the creator of the world, conceiving their murder, praised the revered Yoganidrā with soft words. Having heard the praise of (i.e. uttered by) Brahmā, the highest god, she spoke (these) words with affection: "Tell me what you desire."

Brahmā said:

52. These two very fierce demons have determined to kill me. Quickly delude them with trickery. Leave Viṣṇu, the protector.

53-56. Then that sleep of the lord abandoned that great Viṣṇu. Then he, affectionate to those who sought his shelter, and full of pity, fought a close fight with the two demons in the air. After having fought a very fierce fight for five thousand years, nobody became victorious or nobody was defeated. Then the two demons, who were then deluded by that great Māyā, said to Viṣṇu: "Choose a born from us." O brāhmaṇa, then Viṣṇu laughed and spoke these words:

57-60. "O demons, if you are pleased, then quickly get yourselves killed by me." Then the two fierce demons, having great wisdom, and deluded by that great Māyā said: "There is no doubt that just this boon is granted to you. O Viṣṇu, kill us at a place where there is neither water nor land." Then, O brāhmaṇa, bringing the two great demons up to his hip, he suddenly killed them with the wonderful edge of his disc. Seeing that (Viṣṇu) the Disc-holder had killed the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha, Brahmā, with his fear gone, praised the lord of the god of gods.

Brahmā said:

61-64. Salutation to the highest god who destroys all the pains of him who submitted himself to him. Salutation to him of the nature of the three guṇas, to Nārāyaṇa of unlimited valour. Men who have resorted to your lotus-like feet, never meet with

a calamity. O you of infinite fame, I have known this. You have instantly removed this great calamity of me. You are the lord of supernatural means. You are kind. O lord of the three worlds, O god of gods, O protector of those who seek your shelter, O god, though you protected me from being destroyed by the cruel host of demons, and killed these two demons, and though these two (demons) Madhu and Kaiṭabha are very ruthless, yet mentally I look upon them as our own kinsmen, since they pleased you, the god giving all auspicious (objects), by giving you the boon of the destruction of their own life.

65-69. O lord of gods, to that man, at whom you look with pity, the three worlds are charming; all his enemies along with (the members of) their families perish; his friends and all his kinsmen prosper. O bee to the lotus of the face of Lakṣmī, O god of gods, O you who destroy the fear and grief of the people in the worldly existence, always protect, with compassion, me who am resorting to the pair of your lotus-like feet. I salute you. O you lotus-eyed one, be pleased. O lord of Lakṣmī, be pleased. O lord of all beings, be pleased. O all-sustaining one, I salute you. Salutation to you who are pleased with your devotees. Salutation to you who give (i.e. produce) devotion. Salutation to you, of the form of knowledge. O faultless one, be my refuge. Salutation to you, salutation to you, salutation to you. (Repeated) salutations to you. O you full of the world, protect, protect (me).

Vyāsa said:

70. That revered god, praised with these and other hymns by Brahmā, creator of the worlds, was very much pleased.

The lord said:

71. O Lotus-seated (Brahmā), I am pleased with this hymn and devotion of you. Tell me what you desire. I shall give it to you on the earth.

Brahmā said:

72. O lord of gods, O ocean of compassion, O you full of the world, if you are pleased, then let there be no calamities to (i.e. befalling) your devotees. This is the boon of me (i.e. I ask for).

The lord said:

73-74. O best god, let it be so. I have granted this boon to you. On the earth let my devotee never face a calamity. I always live in the hearts of the devotees of Viṣṇu (i.e. me). Therefore, the devotees of Viṣṇu will never have calamities.

Brahmā said:

75-79. O lord of the world, you have undoubtedly given (me) everything, since you have knocked down these demons in a battle. O lord, you will protect him who, finding sometime, praises you with this hymn with great devotion. Oh, it is a great wonder that you who cannot be conceived by means of meditation by gods, roam in the bodies of the devotees of Viṣṇu (i.e. you). O master, what would happen when you are pleased even for a moment? (Then) it is a great wonder that such as you are, you move in the company of the devotees of Viṣṇu. O enemy of Kaiṭabha, who are the devotees of Viṣṇu? Or what are their characteristic marks? How are all of them to be recognised? O Keśava, tell that to me.

The lord said:

80-82. O best one, it is not possible for me properly to narrate the characteristic marks of Viṣṇu's devotee even for hundreds of crores of kalpas. Listen to them in brief. The mundane existence is dependent on Viṣṇu's devotees. Gods are looked after by Viṣṇu's devotees. I am also dependent on them. Therefore, Viṣṇu's devotees are the greatest. O Brahman, leaving Viṣṇu's devotee I do not stay elsewhere even for a moment. Viṣṇu's devotees are my kinsmen.

83-103. Those who are without lust and anger, who are free from harmfulness and hypocrisy, who are free from greed and folly, should be known to be Viṣṇu's devotees. Those who are not jealous, who are kind, who desire the good of all beings, who speak the truth, should be known to be Viṣṇu's devotees. Those who advise pious acts, who practise pious acts, who serve their preceptors (and elders), should be known to be Viṣṇu's devotees. Those who look upon you, me and Śaṅkara as equal, and who honour a guest, should be known to be Viṣṇu's devotees. Those who have expounded the Vedic learning, who are always devoted

to brāhmaṇas, who are impotent to other women (i.e. women who are not their wives), should be known to be Viṣṇu's devotees. Those who devoutly observe the Ekādaśī-vow, who sing my names, should be known to be Viṣṇu's devotees. Those who put up temples of deities, who wear tulasī-garlands, who wear lotuses and akṣa-seeds, should be known to be Viṣṇu's devotees. O Brahman, those whose bodies are marked with (the signs of) my weapons like the conch, the disc, the mace, the lotus, should be known to be Viṣṇu's devotees. O Lotus-seated (Brahman), those around whose necks are (worn) the garlands of dhātrī-fruits, and who worship me with the leaves of dhātrī, should be known as Viṣṇu's devotees. Those who put marks (on their body) with the clay from the root of the tulasī-tree and with the mud of tulasī-wood, should be known to be Viṣṇu's devotees. Those who are devoted to a bath in Gaṅgā, to (repeating) the name of Gaṅgā, and describe the greatness of Gaṅgā, should be known to be Viṣṇu's devotees. Those in whose house the Śālagrāma-stone always remains, so also remains the holy text of Bhāgavata, should be known to be Viṣṇu's devotees. O best one, those who everyday clean my places, who offer me lamps, should be known to be Viṣṇu's devotees. Those who again make new (i.e. repair) my shattered temple, and put there decorations, should be known as Viṣṇu's devotees. O you Four-faced (Brahmā), those who grant security to the timid, who give knowledge to the brāhmaṇas, should be known to be Viṣṇu's devotees. Those whose heads are sprinkled with the water (flowing) from my feet, and who eat the offerings of eatables presented to me, should be known to be Viṣṇu's devotees. Those who offer food and water to those oppressed by hunger and thirst, and those who take to devout deeds, should be known to be Viṣṇu's devotees. Those who construct gardens and plant the pippala-trees, those who serve cows, should be known to be Vaiṣṇavas. O Brahman, those great devotees who make offering of libations of water everyday to the deceased ancestors, who serve the distressed, should be known to be Vaiṣṇavas. Those who construct lakes and put up villages, who are engaged in offering their daughters (in marriage), who serve their parents-in-law, should be known to be Vaiṣṇavas. Those who wait upon their eldest sister and eldest brother and who do not censure others, should be known to be Vaiṣṇavas.

104-111. All virtues are present in Viṣṇu's devotees. (Even) a particle of blemish is not present in them. Therefore, O Four-faced (Brahman), you now be a Vaiṣṇava. O lord of the beings, always propitiate me with the employment of devout deeds. Undoubtedly everything will be good for you. O four-faced (Brahman), those who look upon the wealth of a deity, the wealth of a brāhmaṇa, and the wealth of others as poison, should be known to be Vaiṣṇavas. Those who are free from devotion to heretics, who are highly devoted to Śiva, who are engaged in (observing) the vow of Caturdaśī, should be known to be Vaiṣṇavas. What is the use of speaking much again and again? Those who worship me, should be known to be Vaiṣṇavas. Create the world again as it was before.

Speaking like this, the highest god vanished there only. Then Brahmā created the entire world as before, and having worshipped Viṣṇu by means of the devout deeds, went to the highest position. Those who devoutly recite this chapter in front of (the idol of) Viṣṇu, become free from all sins, and in the end go to Viṣṇu's abode.

CHAPTER THREE

The Story of King Manobhadra

Jaimini said:

1. O very intelligent Vyāsa, tell me the truth about the yoga of devout deeds. From you I desire to know this yoga of devout deeds.

Vyāsa said:

2-6. It is difficult to obtain the human body (i.e. existence) on this earth, O brāhmaṇa. A wise man, after having got a body, should practise yoga for salvation. There are said to be two kinds of yoga: of acts and of meditation. The first of the two viz. that of acts, gives all desired objects to those who practise it.

Worship of Gaṅgā, of Śrī Viṣṇu, (giving) presents, so also devotion to brāhmaṇas and to the Ekādaśī-vow, similarly devotion to Dhātrī and Tulasī and honouring guests are in brief said to be the constituents of the yoga of acts, O best brāhmaṇa. O brāhmaṇa, without the yoga of acts the yoga of meditation does not succeed. One engaged in the yoga of acts goes to the highest position of Viṣṇu.

Jaimini said:

7-10. O lord, tell me the importance of those which are the constituents of the yoga of acts, if you favour me. What are the virtues of Gaṅgā? O brāhmaṇa, what is the fruit of Viṣṇu-worship? Which are the best presents? What is the devotion to the brāhmaṇas? What is the fruit of the Ekādaśī-vow? What kind of devotion is devotion to Dhātrī? What kind of devotion is Tulasī-devotion? What is honouring a guest? O sage, tell all this to me. I have got eagerness to hear all this. In the three worlds none else but you are able to tell it.

Vyāsa said:

11-16. Well, well, O best brāhmaṇa, your mind is certainly pure, since you have a strong desire and curiosity to hear this secret account. It is not possible to narrate thoroughly the merit of Bhāgīrathī. Therefore, I shall tell you in brief. Listen with an attentive mind. When one mutters the very soft couple of letters 'Gaṅgā', I think his sin would go away. It gratifies great beings. Gaṅgā is easily accessible everywhere. It is not easily accessible at (these) three places: Gaṅgādvāra, Prayāga, and at the place where Gaṅgā joins the ocean. O sage, all gods inclúding Indra, come to the charming Gaṅgādvāra, and bathe there, offer presents etc. O sage, those human beings, animals, insects etc. that accidentally die there, obtain the highest position.

17-21. O brāhmaṇa, listen to a historical account about this, being told by me. By properly listening to it (a man) gets freed from all sins. Formerly in this world there was a powerful king named Manobhadra, who knew the entire prescribed course of conduct and who was born in the family of Soma. His queen was Hemaprabhā who was a loyal wife, who spoke pleasing words, who was very fortunate, and who was endowed with all

(auspicious) marks. The very powerful king, having killed in battle one and all of his enemies, ruled over the entire earth along with the oceans and islands. That very glorious king once called all his ministers and in the assembly spoke (to them) these words with affection:

Manobhadra said:

22-25. O ministers, I have protected this entire earth. All enemies, with their sons, army and elephants have been killed by me. I looked after members of my family by means of all sacrifices with the accompaniment of presents (to brāhmaṇas). (But now) this power of me has been taken away by (this) mighty old age. I, being weak, am unable to perform certain acts. Royal glory like a lovely but an old woman, full of all ornaments, does not look splendid with a powerless person. As long as women of charming eyes do not desire a king to lose his power, all his enemies on the earth are afraid of him.

26-31a. The earth would abandon an old king, though he is endowed with all virtues, and though he has set his heart upon her, as a wanton lady (though) looked after (by a man leaves him). All virtues are obtained by means of devotion. Great glory is obtained through virtues. Bliss is obtainable through (giving) gifts. The Earth is obtainable through might. A man without might is helpless, and is not firm in taming his enemy. A king who accepts the words of a fool only, delights his enemies. Therefore, O excellent ministers, I, dividing my entire kingdom, desire to give it to my two sons, if you agree.

The ministers said:

31b-36. We agree to these words expressed by you, the wise one, O king. There is no doubt about it.

Then, by the king's order, his two young sons named Vīrabhadra and Yaśobhadra, who were the best, endowed with virtues, spoke pleasing words, were devoted to their father, always calm, strong, eagerly engaged in piety, came to the assembly. Then the king, the best among those who knew politics, suddenly divided his kingdom and gave it to them through curiosity. In the meanwhile, O best brāhmaṇas, a vulture along with his mate

came there and sat in the assembly. Seeing the two (princes) to have come, the two birds were very much delighted.

37a. The king said: "Tell (me), what is your auspicious arrival due to?"

The vulture said:

37b-39. O king, O conqueror, I am a vulture. I have gladly come to see the prosperity of your sons. These two have seen (i.e. faced) a great calamity in their former birth. To see their prosperity in this birth we have come (here).

Hearing the very wonderful words of the vulture, the king, with his mind full of wonder spoke again, O brāhmaṇa.

The king said:

40-41. O vulture, I have heard these very wonderful words from you. How do you know the former account of these two? O best among birds, if you know the former account of these two, then tell it in full.

The vulture said:

42-45. O king, in the age called Dvāpara these two were cāṇḍālas. They were the sons of Satyaghoṣa, and their names were Gara and Saṅgara. O king, once they died in their house. To take them from there Yama's servants with large teeth, having nooses in their hands and numbering thousands of crores came there and fastened these two, inflated with pride, with leather-nooses. And they took them to Yama's abode along a path very difficult to tread upon. Seeing these two, Yama said to Citragupta:

46-47a. "O Citragupta, take into account the entire conduct of these two." By his order Citragupta considered their auspicious and inauspicious acts from the beginning and said to Yama:

Citragupta said:

47b-51. These two large-armed ones, are really (men) of meritorious vows and a great heart. If there is any bad act seen among all acts, it is not giving a present to a brāhmaṇa, after

picking it on their own. O king, due to that act only, these two went to hell. The giver who after picking a gift does not give it to a brāhmaṇa, goes to a fierce hell causing fear to all beings. The giver would not remember the gift; the receiver does not ask for it. Both live in hell as long as the moon and the sun are (in the sky). Therefore, O lord, these two, snatching the wealth of a brāhmaṇa, are great sinners.

52. Let the servants quickly take them to a fierce hell.

53-58. O lord of the earth, then the messengers, with their lips bitten due to anger, threw these two into a fierce hell. O king, on the same day Yama's servants coming to me took me along with my spouse to Yama's abode. O king, listen to the act which I also had done. I shall tell it from the beginning. It causes amazement to the listeners. Formerly I was a brāhmaṇa named Sarvaga, belonging to a great family, living in the Saurāṣṭra country, and master of the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas. This my glorious, loyal, very fortunate wife named Mañjukaṣā, was born in a pure family. I was mad due to learning, age and means, O glorious one. I, a youth, once mentally disrespected my parents. (I thought:)

59-63. 'I am worthy of being praised in the assembly of many. I am a hermit. I perform all (good) acts. I am wealthy. I am handsome. I am wise. I am engaged in feeding my relatives. But the parents of just a man like me are attached to sinful acts. They are talkative. They are cruel, and strongly desire the company of heretics. My parents have rendered fruitless valour, life, wealth, so also the family, knowledge, fame and all (my) possessions.' O king, repeatedly thinking like this in my mind, I, through disrespect, gave up service to parents, which gives auspicious (results). Due to this act, O king, I was thrown by (Yama's) messengers, by Yama's order, into the hell where the two great sinners (lived).

64-67. O king, listen how long I, along with my wife, lived in this fierce hell with these two sinners. O best king, I experienced the great misery of hell for thousands of crores of yugas and hundreds of crores of yugas. Then, O king, my wife and I were born in the family of vultures, eating the flesh of dead bodies.

These two, O king, who desired to put an end to (their stay in) hell, were born in the family of locusts to experience the fruit of their deeds.

68-77. O king, listen to the deeds these two did in their existence as locusts. I shall tell them, which would amaze the listeners. O king, once a very mighty wind blew. It made the two fly up and dropped them into the very spotless interior of Gaṅgā. These two, of delicate bodies, having fallen into the water of Gaṅgā, instantly met with death removing all sins. Then messengers of charming eyes came to take them. So also aeroplanes endowed with all enjoyments came (there). These two, freed from all sins, and adorned with Tulasī and flowers, got into a divine aeroplane, and went to Viṣṇu's city. O king, they remained there till Brahmā's existence was manifested. Then by Brahmā's order they came to Indra's city. There they enjoyed pleasures difficult to be obtained even by gods. O king, they remained there till the time the very glorious ones were born in your family to enjoy the entire earth. For him who casts his body into Gaṅgā, there is no rebirth. Yet these two, very meritorious ones, were born to enjoy the earth. O king, these two, along with their sons and grandsons, will enjoy the earth for a long time, will meet with death in Gaṅgā, which is difficult to be had even by the meditating saints, and will be absorbed into Viṣṇu.

78-79. Due to my power of recollecting the former existences, I have told you all this former account. These two crest-jewels of the class of kings, have reached this state after having met with death in Gaṅgā. Who will protect the two of us, the wicked ones.

80-87. Disrespect for friends gives men the affliction (to be suffered) in hell. O king, it was seen just in my case. O best brāhmaṇa, absence of devotion to parents gives pain in this world and in the next. In this world it leads to the destruction of wealth and in the next world (i.e. after death) it leads to hell. O king, I think the sin like a brāhmaṇa's murder is better. There is at sometime acquittance from it. But this (misery) is eternal. On the earth men cut off, with the axe of disrespect for their parents, the tree of religious merit, destroying all afflictions, and secured with great trouble. O king, Viṣṇu himself eats whatever is presented into the mouth of the father (and mother), since, O hero,

Viṣṇu is of the form of the father (and mother). Parents are actually deities. Those who serve them day and night, have all fulfilments due to the grace of the lord of the world. Those men who remain (even) for a day without serving their parents live for a thousand kalpas in hell. Therefore, this great misery has come to me now. I do not know when I, along with my wife, go to (i.e. obtain) salvation.

Vyāsa said:

88. Having heard these words of him, and having grasped them, O best brāhmaṇa, the king became delighted and being amazed, spoke again:

The king said:

89-94. O vulture, I have heard these wonderful words from your mouth. But I and these (ministers) do not properly apprehend them.

Then, O best king (?) there was heard a loud voice in the sky: "This is true, true, true. There is no doubt about it." Then, O brāhmaṇa sage, the bird, along with his wife, became as he was before the narration of the greatness of Gaṅgā. Drums were sounded. Best gandharvas sang. Hosts of celestial nymphs danced. Shower(s) of flowers dropped down. A divine aeroplane, endowed with all enjoyments, arrived. The hosts of messengers, sent by (Viṣṇu) the enemy of Kaiṭabha, (also) came (there). Then (the bird) moving everywhere, along with his dear wife forthwith got into the aeroplane and went to Viṣṇu's abode.

95-96. O best brāhmaṇa, the king, having heard about the wonderful act, became, along with his sons and wife, exclusively devoted to the worship of Gaṅgā. In the three worlds there is no holy place like Gaṅgā, by merely uttering the name of which (one) moving everywhere would obtain salvation.

97-98. O best brāhmaṇa, I have narrated to you the greatness of Gaṅgādvāra, which destroys all sins. What else do you desire to hear? The sins of those men who listen to this chapter with great respect in a temple, and of those devotees of the class of brāhmaṇas, who listen to it, perish suddenly.

CHAPTER FOUR

Praṇidhi, Padmāvatī and Dhanurdhvaja

Jaimini said:

1-2. Through your grace I have heard about the greatness of Gaṅgādvāra. Now I desire to listen to the greatness of Prayāga. O sage, also tell me about the greatness of the union of Gaṅgā and the ocean. On the earth none except you is able to tell it.

Vyāsa said:

3-9. O dear, I cannot thoroughly tell about the fruit of (the bath at) Prayāga or at the place where Gaṅgā joins the ocean. O Brāhmaṇa, listen to it in brief. O sage, do all those crores of holy places in the universe attain similarity with Prayāga? All gods like Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva praise (the bath) at the confluence of Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī. Those who bathe there in (the month of) Māgha, when the Sun is in (the Zodiacal sign) Capricornus, never return (to his world) from the world of Viṣṇu. The fruit, O brāhmaṇa, due to bathing at Prayāga in (the month of) Māgha would be a crorefold more than that obtained by the wise by (offering) thousands of crores of cows, (performing) sacrifices like the horse-sacrifice, (giving) gifts of gold of the measure of Meru mountain and other gifts, offering oblations into fire and giving gifts to brāhmaṇas at Kurukṣetra, Puṣkara, Prabhāsa and Gayā. Therefore, Prayāga is the best of all holy places.

10-13. Undoubtedly that inexhaustible religious merit which, O best brāhmaṇa, as told in Vedas, scriptures and Purāṇas, is had by practising a severe penance for a long time, by bathing, giving gifts and observing vows in (the water of) Godāvarī, when the Sun is in the Zodiacal sign Leo, is had by bathing at Prayāga in the month of Māgha. Hear from me who am telling it, about the fruit which a man obtains by fasting at Kāśī on Caturdaśī in the dark half of the month of Phālguna. He, freed from sins committed during crores of existences, and having every form, and emancipating a crore of men (of his family), delights with Śiva.

14-15. A brāhmaṇa gets the same fruit as he obtains by worshipping Viṣṇu for a hundred crores of kalpas at other places, by bathing just once at Prayāga in the month of Māgha and worshipping (Viṣṇu) even for a day, when the Sun is in (the Zodiacal sign) Capricornus. I am telling the truth (and) truth (only). All (that fruit) would be inexhaustible.

16-17. A man delights with Viṣṇu for as many hundred kalpas as many days a man stays there (i.e. at Prayāga) in the month of Māgha. He who has once bathed in the water of Gaṅgā and Yamunā is instantly freed from all sins by seeing it.

18-19. If men desire to cross this ocean of mundane existence very difficult to cross, they should devoutly see (the idol of) Viṣṇu after bathing in Gaṅgā and Yamunā. O brāhmaṇa sage, if men, by offering their body, worship him there, they instantly get whatever they desire. There is no doubt about it.

20-24. In this matter I shall tell you a historical account. Listen to it, hearing which a man is freed from all sins. There was a very wealthy vaiśya named Praṇidhi. He was solely devoted to worshipping deities and guests, O brāhmaṇa. His wife, Padmāvatī by name, was chaste, loyal wife, of a beautiful body, endowed with good character, born of a good family and speaking in a pleasant manner. O best brāhmaṇa, all those virtues which the highest god has produced as fit to be present in the bodies of women, were present in her. O brāhmaṇa, that vaiśya Praṇidhi, having taken much wealth, went for trade at an auspicious time and on an auspicious day.

25-27. Piety springs from wealth. Great glory springs from wealth. A man secures a (noble) family through wealth. What would take place without wealth? Even a friend runs away by seeing a man without wealth. In autumn a cloud without water would be reduced to big pieces. As long as relatives get to eat, they remain (with him). He who has wealth has (i.e. is born in) a (noble) family. He (alone) is intelligent (and) wise.

28-31. A man, without wealth, though living, is like a dead one. He whose mind turns away from attaining religious merit, material wealth and knowledge should be known to be a fool. Greater is the fruit of more (exertion). Piety should always be practised. Wealth should always be earned. Knowledge should always be learnt (i.e. got) by wise men. Wealth and knowledge

increase everyday by giving them (to others). Piety of men does not increase without its being preserved. A man should not abandon even (a piece of) wood or (a blade of) grass after having got them.

32-37a. A man given to storing never sinks. Then that vaiśya Praṇidhi skilled in domestic affairs, put his wife in his house, and went for trade. O brāhmaṇa sage, once his wife taking unguents to rub and cleanse the body with, went along with her friends for bathing. Then (a cāṇḍāla), the resting place of sins, Dhanurdhvaja by name, saw her who had the beauty of an expanding golden lotus, whose face was like a blooming lotus, whose eyes were like those of a young deer, whose breasts were charming, large and raised, bathing as she liked. Seeing the vaiśya-wife that cāṇḍāla, smit with love, and not considering his own figure, laughed and said (these) words:

Dhanurdhvaja said:

37b-40a. O auspicious one, O you having large hips, O you of a charming smile, O you beautiful one, who are you? O dear one, why do you take away my mind with charms of your exuberant youth? O you of large buttocks, O you slender one, you, who are virtuous, should enjoy full happiness with me who am (also) virtuous.

O brāhmaṇa, hearing Dhanurdhvaja's words, her friends, getting angry, and biting their lips, spoke (these) words:

The friends said:

40b-44a. O fool, O wicked one, O you born in the family of the wicked, she will not throw even her foot at (i.e. will not even kick) you. This lady is a loyal wife, highly devoted to religious practices. Those who desire their own happiness do not look at her with an evil eye. Those who are foolish and who are afflicted with the fire of the passion of love, are burnt on seeing the beauty of the face of the wife of another person and the wealth of others. O you of a sinful mind, go away. Do not speak words which are very unbearable. We shall not touch you even with our feet.

Dhanurdhvaja said:

44b-48a. Fie upon this word 'caste', since you have not honoured me knowing all virtues in my cāṇḍālahood (i.e. due to my being a cāṇḍāla)! On reaching gold covered with necklaces and remaining in a pitcher, which man, conversant with the collection of excellences, will not seize it? Therefore, O friends, act in such a way that I shall now secure this young lady. I submit myself to you.

O best brāhmaṇa, to the fool who was repeatedly speaking like this, the friends, with great curiosity produced in them, spoke these words (to him):

The friends said:

48b-53. O you very wicked one, if you indeed long for this young lady then quickly cast your body into the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā.

Looking at one another's face, and laughing, they then took the good man's wife, and entered their houses. Then that cāṇḍāla who had killed thousands of brāhmaṇas, longing for her died in the water of Gaṅgā and Yamunā. Then that cāṇḍāla, remembering his own account, became a strong person, resembling the figure of her husband, and having all his qualities. Then that vaiśya Praṇidhi, having carried out the trade came home on just that auspicious day. The cāṇḍāla also, O brāhmaṇa, entered his house.

54-56. He resembled Praṇidhi in form, age and qualities. Seeing the two, of the same (i.e. similar) figure, who were mines of virtues, she thought (to herself): 'Whose wife am I? Who is my husband?' Then that chaste woman, seeing the pair of husbands, was amazed, and praised god Viṣṇu with words having pleasing letters.

Padmāvatī said:

57-61. I salute Govinda who has endless forms, whose lotus-like feet are worshipped by deities like Indra, who is the lord of deep and abstract meditation, who is desireless among those who know deep and abstract meditation, who is the giver

of devotion, and who is fit to be worshipped by the meditating saints. Salutation to you, the destroyer of Kaiṭabha; salutation to you, the destroyer of Madhu; salutation to you who destroyed the demon Kaṁsa; salutation to you who knocked down Cāṇūra. Salutation to you who took out the Vedas; eternal salutation to you who lifted the earth; salutation to you who are capable of bearing the earth; salutation to you who are the destroyer of the demons. Salutation to you whose feet are washed by the water of Gaṅgā; salutation to you who destroy the kṣatriyas; salutation to you who killed Rāvaṇa's family; salutation to you who destroyed the demons. Salutation to you who denounced sacrifices; salutation to you who destroyed the Mleccha-families; salutation to you seated in the heart-lotus; salutation to you who are an ornament among your enemies (ripudhvaja?).

62-65. O lord, O dear to the cowherdesses, be pleased. O bee to the lotus-face of Lakṣmī, be pleased. O Viṣṇu, be pleased. I constantly salute you. O you lotus-eyed one, be pleased; O you who have the disc in your hand, O you who hold the mace called Kaumodakī in your hand, be pleased. O Viṣṇu, who has held (the conch called) Pāñcajanya, be pleased. I constantly, salute you who hold a lotus. I am constantly roaming, being deluded by you—Keśava, in the curious habitation of the mundane existence, having the darkness of ignorance and the lamp of knowledge. O enemy of the demons, Brahmā, Indra and other excellent gods do not understand your Māyā. (Then) how can I, a human being, understand your Māyā? Kindly remove (this) delusion (taking place) before (you).

Vyāsa said:

66-67. Having heard the praise of (i.e. made by) her, lord Viṣṇu, the master of the world, giving the fruits of the four goals (of human life), took notice of it, and he whose lustre was like that of a crore suns, suddenly manifested himself. She, having looked at (i.e. touched) the ground with her head, saluted the pair of his feet.

68. (She said:) O lord of Lakṣmī, O you who give enjoyment and salvation, salutation to you. Remove the confusion about my husband, of me who am without knowledge.

The lord said:

69-71. O beautiful-bodied one, give up your confusion. Both these are your husbands. O you lady of beautiful hips, always serve them devotedly. That who is your young, very intelligent husband Praṇidhi, has himself become two to enjoy the fruit of pleasure, O chaste lady. O you of beautiful buttocks, you too always enjoy pleasure with them, as Lakṣmī of infinite forms sports with me.

Padmāvatī said:

72. O god, men do not approve two husbands of one woman. O you full of pity, save me who am sunk under the billow of the ocean of shame.

The lord said:

73. O chaste lady, as you are certainly afraid of infamy on the earth, the refore, O you of a beautiful face, come to my city with them.

74-75. Then by the order of the lord, an aeroplane immediately came there and taking the two (with her) she got ready to go to Vaikuṇṭha. She too, while going with her husbands along the path, saw a magnanimous person along with a lady seated in a chariot, O Jaimini.

76-79. He was supported by hosts of messengers, having eyes like lotus-petals, resembling atasī flowers, having four hands, and seated on Garuḍa. That chaste, beautiful lady then asked those messengers of Viṣṇu, of the form of Viṣṇu, "Who is this man seated in the chariot? O magnanimous ones, who are you having lotus-like eyes, all resembling Viṣṇu, having in your hands conches, discs etc.?" Then all those messengers of Viṣṇu, very much delighted, resembling Viṣṇu in valour, laughed and said:

Viṣṇu's messengers said:

80. O chaste lady, we are Viṣṇu's messengers. Taking this man, a meritorious soul, we are going to the high, excellent world.

Padmāvatī said:

81-84. Due to the power of which merit has he acquired such a state? O magnanimous messengers of Viṣṇu, tell it to me.

Viṣṇu's messengers said:

This is a demon named Bṛhaddhvaja. He, causing affliction to the world, lived in a forest etc. He is very powerful and valorous. He kidnapped others' wives, snatched others' wealth, and was an active deceiver. He ate cow's flesh, spoke cruel words, and censured deities. He always did acts that were sinful. O you devoted wife, even in a dream he did not do a virtuous deed.

85-88. O you of large buttocks, this one always tormented by love, getting into a chariot, moves in the sky to kidnap the wife of another man. He, smitten by love forcibly embraces whichever very young woman he sees and wherever he sees her. Once he saw the beautiful wife of a king named Bhīmakeśa (engaged) in sport, and in the prime of youth. Then seeing her bright like a golden lotus, he affectionately said these words to her: "Who are you? What are you doing here?"

89-94. Then that wife of king Bhīmakeśa said: "I, adorned by the name Keśinī and knowing the art of sexual enjoyment, am the wife of king Bhīmakeśa. (But) the king does not even for a moment look at (i.e. care for) me who am conversant with all virtues, who am delighted in love, who am born in his own family, and who am blemishless. I, about whom inquiry is abandoned by the husband, who am grieving over my fate, who am tormented by the fire of separation, always stay here only. O best one, being pleased, please tell me everything: Who are you? How have you come to this garden?" Then he said these words: "O you having a face like the full moon, I am a demon using tricks, and have come here to embrace you. Abandon your angry husband who always finds fault with you. O slender one, resort to me. I shall give you excellent pleasure."

95-99. Then that virtuous (?) wife bound the demon with her creeper-like arms and put her mouth into his (i.e. kissed him). O you of fine hips, having embraced her who got perturbed due to discrimination and excitement, he got along with her into a chariot. With great eagerness they became (i.e. acted like a married) couple. Getting into a chariot with the wind's speed,

they went along the aerial path. Then he spoke these words to her: "O slender one, see, from your husband's country we have come to the place where Gaṅgā joins the Ocean". Then the lady in the chariot, seeing the union of Gaṅgā and the Ocean suddenly died due to great fear.

100-102. The demon also seeing the good (?) lady dead, lamented much, and died instantly. By the order of the Garuḍa-bannered (Viṣṇu) we are taking these two, of meritorious deeds and free from sins, to Vaikuṇṭha. Even sinners casting their bodies in water, on ground, or in the air at (the place of) the union of Gaṅgā and the Ocean, reach the highest position.

103-107a. The holy place at the union of Gaṅgā and the Ocean is difficult to be found in the three worlds. Even a killer of a brāhmaṇa, who observes a fast there on the Ekādaśī day in the month of Māgha in winter becomes purified. There is no doubt about this. Having bathed at the place of the union of Gaṅgā and the Ocean, and having seen (the idol of) Hari, Mādhava (i.e. Viṣṇu), and having seen Kārtikeya, rebirth does not take place. Kārtikeya is actually Viṣṇu. The identity between the two is always established. All those who see Kārtikeya, go to (i.e. attain) liberation. Hear (i.e. note) that the holy place at the union of Gaṅgā and the Ocean is superior to all (other) holy places. One who dies there in water, on ground or in the air, obtains liberation.

Vyāsa said:

107b-112. O Jaimini, speaking like this, all those messengers of Viṣṇu, taking the two, went, along the aerial path, to Viṣṇu's abode. That (Praṇidhi's) wife, the chaste Padmāvatī, along with the couple of husbands, became assimilated with Viṣṇu, the giver of the four goals of human life, enjoyed all pleasures there, difficult to be obtained; they obtained the highest knowledge and were assimilated with Viṣṇu. Gaṅgā is full of all holy places. Viṣṇu is full of all holy places. Therefore, devotion for Gaṅgā and for Viṣṇu is laid down. Formerly, a king named Mādhava, practised penance for a long time at (the place of) the union of Gaṅgā and the Ocean, and along with his wife, got salvation.

Jaimini said:

113. Who is this Mādhava whom you have mentioned? What acts did he do? How did he practise penance? O best one, tell all that to me.

Vyāsa said:

114. Listen to the story of that magnanimous king Mādhava, O brāhmaṇa sage. O very intelligent one, I shall narrate it in brief.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Story of Mādhava and Sulocanā

Vyāsa said:

1-4. There was a city named Tāladhvaja. It resembled the city of gods. It was well-known in all the worlds and was crowded with the hosts of meritorious (persons). There was a king named Vikrama, born of a pure family. He was religious, truthful and devoted to the protection of his subjects. His wife named Hārāvatī was excellent in the world, who had vanquished the moon's lustre by means of her face. In a host of his wives she alone was dear to him, as Gaṅgā is to the Ocean in the host of rivers.

5-8. O dvija, due to fate a son endowed with all good marks was born to her after sometime. The sovereign emperor who knew all holy texts, named him Mādhava according to the rite told in the holy texts. O brāhmaṇa, then that powerful Mādhava, endowed with virtues, crossed, after sometime, the river of all learning. O brāhmaṇa, the king consecrated his son, the worshipper of the host of all deities, as the heir-apparent.

9-10. O brāhmaṇa, one day he, through curiosity, went along with an army of four divisions to a great forest for hunting. Having killed many animals there, he at mid-day strove to go to the city from the forest.

11-16. Mādhava gladly came to his city with his army. He

saw a young woman engaged in bathing in a lake. Her body was visible due to substances and garments fit for bathing. With the beauty of her face she had vanquished the moon. Her beautiful cheeks were shining by means of two golden ear-rings. Her hips were covered by her very long hair; she laughed charmingly. She was the bud of a golden lotus. Her breasts were charming and raised. Her waist was slender like that of a lion; her voice was sweet like that of a cuckoo in spring. The beautiful, charming one, was placed by Cupid as the banner in the kingdom of youths. Seeing her like that in the lonely forest, which man carrying his life (i.e. which living man) would not be influenced by the passion of love?

17-20. Then that son of Vikrama seeing that beautiful one like that, had his heart wounded by Cupid's arrows, and thought: 'I have not seen anyone else like this on the earth. I desire to make my life fruitful by embracing her here. Of all people I am the best due to my age, handsomeness and virtues. I shall today take her even though she is Indra's woman. Who can (publicly) speak about the fault due to kidnapping someone else's wife, since my father is the king?'

21-23. Having thus firmly thought in his mind, the passionate one kept his army away and went to (the place) where she was bathing. There is no wonder that in the world the three, viz. wealth, arrogance and desire of carnal gratification destroy the power of discrimination. His father is the destroyer of sins and protector of righteousness of people. It is pity that the god of love himself deludes the entire world!

24-27. Seeing him coming with a great speed, she who was sporting (all) alone, became very much anxious. 'I think that seeing me, the young one, alone in the forest, he speedily runs to me. All sages say: Righteousness when protected, protects (the people). What will happen here, cannot be known just now. Enemies run to the place where there is none to help (a person). In that case running away is commended. Staying there destroys life.'

28-29. That beautiful woman, thinking like this, and placing the pitcher on the left (side of her) waist, decided through fear to run away from the lake. Then that Mādhava also came in

front of her with a great speed, O brāhmaṇa, and spreading out his hand, stood (before her).

Śrī Mādhava said:

30-35. O excellent lady, O you of a beautiful body, snatching away my heart by means of the power of your excellent youth, you are running away. I who have lost my sense, am tormented. O you of unsteady outer corners of your eyes, O you of a charming body, what is your name? Who is your husband? Have you come from heaven? (For) there is none else like you on the earth. O beautiful lady, O you whose face is like a lotus, you are the best (lady) here (i.e. on the earth). You are endowed with all (auspicious) marks. How do you, like a maid-servant, carry water? On your bosom you always carry golden breasts; and on your waist you carry the water-pitcher. This is wonderful, O you lady of a delicate body. The toes (turned) red on the path very much heated by the sun, at times appear like the buds of the japā (flowers). O you of large buttocks, resort to me with love; O you of a beautiful face, abandon the pitcher. Just on seeing me, your affliction has ended (i.e. would end).

36-38. I am the son, called Mādhava, of king Śrī Vikrama. With full attachment I, of an excellent body, will be yours, O beautiful lady. In the group of my wives you will be my favourite, as the jasmine is to a bee among creepers having good flowers. Or even if, through pride, you transgress my words, I shall not leave you, since I am the son of the king.

Vyāsa said:

39-42. Hearing the words uttered by him, she left the path, and remained with her face hung down. (Then), O brāhmaṇa, she very slowly said: "Even if you will never listen to the words of me, a stranger to you, yet giving up my sense of shame, I will speak to you. O great hero, I am the wife of a kṣatriya Subāhu. I, Candrakalā, am taking water for the worship of deities. The words which you uttered are not becoming to your family. All (men) born in your family are impotent for others' wives.

43-46. I am a lonely woman. You are the majestic dignity of heroes. What glory will be yours by forcibly embracing me here? By embracing the wife of another there would be plea-

sure for a moment only. There will be infamy here (i.e. in this world); the rest (i.e. afterwards there) will be misery for more than a hundred kalpas. O brave one, this is the land of religious rites. Meritorious deeds should he done here. Do not put your mind into (i.e. do not think of) kidnapping the wife of another (man). Desire of sensual enjoyments results from greed. Sin results from desire of sensual enjoyments. Death comes from sin. And even after death there (results) residence in hell.

47-51. All your virtues are in vain. Your existence also is fruitless, (since) you, being influenced by lust, long for another's wife. My body is produced from flesh, urine, feces, bones. Even seeing this, are you influenced by Cupid, not afraid of your citizens, because you are born in a royal family? Do you not see Yama, the god of death, roaring over your head? The fish seize the fish-hook; (but) all of them are ignorant. How do you, even being a wise one, seize a fish-hook on reaching it? In the three worlds discrimination is the highest abode of riches. Indiscretion is the highest abode of miseries."

52-55. O Jaimini, having heard the words spoken by her, Mādhava who was deluded by passion of love, again stooping humbly, said: "O dear one, protect me whose mind is shattered by the volley of the arrows of your glances. Protect me. I am seeking your refuge. A woman is most dear as long as she is in youth. A golden bee does not go to a lotus-plant whose fibres have become bud-like (i.e. contracted). O you deer-eyed one, be pleased. Protect me, your own servant. On hearing your insipid words, my heart breaks."

Candrakalā said:

56-57. O great hero, give up your grief. Listen to my good words. I shall tell you about my mental agony which is capable of removing your grief. In the Plakṣa island, beyond the ocean, there is a well-known city named Vikhyātā, resembling Indra's city.

58-59. There lives the king named Guṇākara, who is the best (king), very glorious, endowed with all virtues, and who, the strong one, resembles fire in valour. His wife, Suśīlā by name, was endowed with all (good) marks. By her service she had won over her husband's heart; (and) she was kind to people.

60-65. O hero, her daughter, named Sulocanā, was born from her womb. By her beauty she conquered all hosts of beautiful ladies. Who on the earth is able to describe her beauty and the heap of her virtues? The creator created another (woman) on seeing her beauty. O great hero, O prince, I was her maid-servant. I, a beautiful woman, have through (bad) back, come to your land. There is no (other) beautiful lady like her. There is no (other) handsome man like you. If you desire heavenly enjoyments, then accept her in marriage. Does a strong lion not fix (his mind) to secure, with effort, a female elephant, after having discarded a female fox even though she has come near him? In the world an industrious man obtains great wealth. Tell me which work is (accomplished) without effort, in the world.

Vyāsa said:

66. Having heard those words of her, Mādhava, Viṣṇu's worshipper, put away his passion of love and thus spoke to the beautiful woman:

Mādhava said:

67-68. O lotus-eyed one, by what mark shall I know the girl? Tell me that, O you of beautiful hips, if you favour me. How can I, an ignorant man, go to the other side of the ocean? How shall I have a meeting with her?

Candrakalā said:

69-71. On her left hip is a mark resembling a sesamum-seed. By just seeing that you will recognise the beautiful-eyed one. In your stable there is the son of the noble horse (of Indra) named Uccaiḥśravas. He is an excellent horse, going (i.e. able to go) everywhere. By mounting upon that best horse, having wind's speed, you will speedily go to the (other) end of the ocean, since the earth is easy to subdue (i.e. to tread upon).

72-74. Then the king's son, along with his army, came home. That chaste woman Candrakalā also being very pleased, went home. Thinking over her words, Mādhava, with his mind full of anxiety hastily and suddenly went to the stable. He, the son of Vikrama, endowed with valour, joined there the palms of his

hands, and said to the very powerful horses endowed with good qualities:

Mādhava said:

75-77. All of you are noble and endowed with all (auspicious) marks. Which horse is able to take me beyond the ocean?

Then all those horses, on hearing his words, with one another turned their faces towards the ground through fear, and were not ready to take him. One horse, endowed with all (auspicious) marks, went in front of Mādhava, and spoke these words:

78-83. "I shall undoubtedly take you beyond the ocean. But, O prince, listen to my agonies: I eat what is left over after others have eaten. I am bound with cords having crores of knots. O hero, even in a dream, I, a strong one, have not seen grains of rice. Then, O prince, what can be said about other pleasures? O hero, the valour of the good would not be possible without respect (i.e. unless they are respected). How can fire be produced without wood (only) with ghee etc.? I am like this. All these are endowed with decorations. But dogs, (though they are) adorned with all ornaments, are not like lions. O king, O lord, in a moment only I can go round the earth with the mountains, islands and oceans."

Mādhava said:

84-88. O horse, forgive all censures inflicted on you by my father. From today you are the chief (horse) in my stable. In (the mind of) the best man torment given by others does not always abide. Water, heated by fire, would be cool in a moment. Sugarcane causes satisfaction even for a moment due to its sweetness.

Having spoken thus, the prince saluted the horse. And then, at an auspicious moment, that brilliant Mādhava, along with his servant called Praceṣṭa, mounted on the back of the horse, and crossing the ocean, went to the city (of Vikhyātā) which was endowed with all excellences, was like the city of Indra, and bright due to the rows of great mansions.

89. Seeing there, a good lady, a female gardener, present nearby Mādhava, with a smiling face, uttered these soft words, O brāhmaṇa:

90-93. "O old lady, O mother, I am a traveller. O unknown one, I, a rich man, named Mādhava, desire to stay in your house for a day." That woman, (a female gardener,) seller of perfumes, who was hospitable, took the guest, and he being delighted, very devoutly entered her house. O brāhmaṇa, she treated him with respect, according to the manner told (in holy texts). O brāhmaṇa, Mādhava, with his mind full of anxiety, passed that night. O brāhmaṇa, when the bright morning dawned, Mādhava told the (female gardener), seller of perfumes, his entire mission.

94-98. On that auspicious day only, the queen arranged for the rite of anointing Sulocanā with fragrant substances etc. (as a preliminary to her marriage). O brāhmaṇa, having heard about that rite of anointing the princess, Mādhava sank in the mass of the billows of the ocean of grief. 'The rite of anointing her with perfumes etc., longing for whom I left my kingdom, I abandoned my relatives and crossed the great ocean, will take place today only. All the efforts I have made up to now are fruitless. But people will not say that he, fascinated by the sweet one, went over the entire (distance). He who well knows what ought to be done, would not have his exertion foiled.'

99-108. Repeatedly thinking like this in his mind, Mādhava wrote (and put) a love-letter into the garland, flowers, etc. (taken to Sulocanā by the female perfumer): "O maiden, I am the son, named Mādhava, of Vikrama, the magnanimous emperor of Tāladhvaja. O maiden, a female servant of you, Candrakalā by name, lives there. Formerly, the host of your virtues was narrated by her to me. With my heart attached to the host of your virtues, I, having mounted upon a horse, crossed the ocean and came to your city. O maiden Sulocanā, now choose me as your husband, since in this ocean of the mundane I seek your refuge, (and) since no other man knows you (to be) virtuous. A bee alone, and not a frog, knows the virtues of a lotus-plant. So also not one white cloud only appears in the sky (i.e. Many white clouds appear in the sky). But the lotus-plant chooses none else but the moon." Then the prince, handed over that letter, along with a golden ring, to the female gardener. Then the perfumer, putting that letter, along with the ring, into a garland of flowers, went quickly to the princess. Having presented that garland of flowers to her, she went a little distance away

from her through fear, and stood there with the palms of her hands joined.

109-118a. The very clever princess then saw the letter along with the ring, and read it from the beginning. The princess who was amazed, also wrote, on the backside of the letter, its reply: "O prince, O you of large arms, I have read all the words that you wrote. O best one, read these my words fitting (to your letter). Today will take place the rite of anointing with fragrant substances etc. (preliminary to marriage); and my marriage will certainly take place tomorrow. Nobody in the world will disregard what is approved by one's father. In case of (a piece of) work which is accomplished with difficulty people should not exert themselves too much. If the work succeeds then no exertion is (felt), but if it does not succeed, then there is exertion (i.e it is felt). Yet, listen to (the means) by which you will (be able to) secure me, for which you have even crossed the ocean. I have to go round this Vidyādhara (chosen as the) groom (for me). Adorned with many ornaments and with my left arm raised I shall go before (i.e. to) him. The hero, would stand facing me. He who is able to take me (away) will be my husband. This is the truth, the truth only, that I have written in the letter. Otherwise it is not possible to transgress the well-fixed rite."

118b-119a. Writing this the maiden handed over (the letter) to her only. She too, taking that letter went to Mādhava.

119b-121. Mādhava, having read what she had written in the letter, again wrote (another letter) with great impatience, O brāhmaṇa: "O virtuous maiden born in a lucky family, all that you have said (in your letter) is just what I had (also) thought. There is no doubt about it." Then, O brāhmaṇa, that female gardener again approached her.

122-125a. And she gave Sulocanā that note (i.e. the letter) of beautiful letters. Then perceiving that her letter was accepted by the prince, she was very much delighted, and was repeatedly amazed, O brāhmaṇa. 'He will undoubtedly do it (i.e. accept me) as he has given his assent. Then is that man Mādhava Indra himself? A husband is always a receptacle of love in this world and the next. Even without seeing him he is respected by me as my husband.'

125b-132. Thinking like this, and sighing again and again,

that chaste lady went with her friends to the perfumer's house under the pretext of (taking) a bath. That respectable perfumer, seizing the maiden with her hand, showed her Mādhava sleeping on a bed. The maiden seeing him resembling Cupid horripilated, and observed his entire great body. The pair of her eyes, merged in (i.e. fixed on) whichever part of the body of him, did not move elsewhere, as it found it difficult to glance anywhere else. (She said:) "He is actually god of love or (Kṛṣṇa) Devakī's son, or actually Śarva, the lord of Pārvatī and the controller of all objects of senses. With such form a man is not born in the world. The life of a deer-eyed one with this one as her lord is fruitful. Did the creator, being influenced by my devotion, create him (as a man) with great effort, when I was born as a daughter? From today this one alone is my lord. There is no doubt about it."

133a. Speaking like this, she decided to go home.

133b-135. The perfumer (the female gardener) said: "O maiden, O good one, you should also keep in mind this consideration. A man does not look as handsome during sleep* as he actually is. O you deer-eyed one, (even) in his sleep (i.e. while he is asleep) all the godly signs like joy, (characteristic) bend in the body, gentle eyes and a peculiar smile (are seen). Though addressed, he will not certainly get up (as is clear from) his lips being bitten (i.e. closed)."

136-137. She slowly touched** his hand with her hands (and said:) "Listen, the princess has courageously come (to see you)." Hearing that Mādhava too, with his mind overcome with confusion, got up and politely said these words to her:

Mādhava said:

138-139. O maiden, my existence is fruitful; my effort is fruitful, that I have actually seen your lotus-like face. O maiden, with all your youth, choose me as your husband. O beautiful one, in the world there is no other groom proper for you than me.

Sulocanā said:

140-141a. O fortunate one, due to my great luck you would

**nindayā* is obviously a misprint. It should be *nidrayā*. (Ed.)

***adarśayat* is perhaps a misprint for *amarśayat*. (Ed.)

be my lord. The words that I uttered are very reliable. O glorious one, order me. I shall go home.

Mādhava said:

141b-143a. If I speak 'wait', O maiden, it would be arrogance (on my part). The word 'go' does not come from my mouth. Having thought for yourself, O beautiful-bodied one, do what is proper. Since the words are true, you will be very much devoted.

143b-151. Thus addressed by him, the maiden, being delighted, went home. Mādhava, surrounded by many attendants, stayed there only. The charming Vidyādhara just remained as the groom. All the men there, adorned with garlands and sandal, and wearing divine garments, shone. In that city at places there was singing, at places there was dancing, and at places there was a row of lamps (put) by someone. The ten quarters were filled with the neighing of the groups of horses, the trumpets of elephants and the delightful notes of birds. O Jaimini, the entire atmosphere was full of hosts of various banners and royal mansions. Some blew conches, some sounded large and (small) drums, so also the sweet(-sounding) musical instruments etc. Then all young ladies, with lotus-buds, and with faces resembling the moon, sang good, charming songs. The ground there appeared like a maiden, due to the garlands dropping down on account of mutual friction, and due to sandal flowing on account of perspiration.

152-155. The beautiful Sulocanā, surrounded by relatives, mounted upon a seat made of gambhārī-wood, and went to an excellent place. In the meanwhile Vikrama's son (Mādhava), asleep on the bed, did not, due to (his ill-)luck, know about the marriage of Sulocanā, of beautiful eyes. Those that are deluded by hundreds of tricks of the creator, are not happy in the world. Therefore, this man (Mādhava) forgot his own agreement, and slept happily. A lotus-plant that leaves the forest through fear of fire and enters water, is burnt (i.e. bitten) there by frost-fire. Whatever is one's fate cannot be changed.

156-158. Let people recite the entire holy texts like that of the Veda. Let them serve a king. Let them practise severe penance

everyday. Yet prosperity does not go to the luckless. Pains and pleasures remain over (one's) head. O best one, they come at the time of others (i.e. Pains come when pleasures are expected and vice versa). Praceṣṭa, seeing the unhappy Mādhava sleeping, and knowing the agreement between the two, thought:

159-163. 'Fie upon this prince! Deluded by destiny's trickery, he, forgetting his agreement, enjoys sleep. That maiden now near the groom (Vidyādhara) would have been unhappy. What would happen if she is taken (by him)? The agreement with her will be fruitless. O sinful one, keeping sleep over your head, remain (here only). Mounting upon the horse I would carry away that beautiful lady. With a great difficulty does one obtain a gem of a maiden and a jewel. Then what is the use of serving this wicked Mādhava? Kings are served (by men) with full devotion for money. If that itself has gladly come (to me), why should I have the trouble of (rendering) service?'

164-168a. Having thought like this, and having mounted upon the horse, Praceṣṭa went, along the aerial path, to the place where the princess was. Having gone round the bridegroom keeping him to her right, and remembering her agreement, she had stood before the Vidyādhara after raising her left hand (i.e. with her left hand raised). Having seized the maiden's hand, the very powerful Praceṣṭa very quickly put her on the horse's back. Taking the princess to the very beautiful city of Kāñcī, and seeing it, Praceṣṭa, with the fear in his mind gone away, and waving his hand, hurriedly said (to her):

Praceṣṭa said:

168b-174a. See this city named Kāñcī, which is near the sea-shore, which is well-known everywhere, and which gives happiness to all men. O you having a face like the moon, here there is no fear of either that hero Mādhava or the Vidyādhara. O beautiful lady, give extinction, accomplished by your pitcher-like breasts and your hands, to this row of flames of the fire of lust, sticking to the fuel (burning) in my heart. The bee of my mouth would now desire (i.e. now desires) to drink the honey in (i.e. from) the charming lotus of your mouth. O dear one, who waits for one about whom nothing is known? God of love strikes me

with his arrows due to the conduct of your charming body. O dear one, protect me, protect me. I have sought your refuge.

The beautiful lady, with her entire body burnt with anger born of grief, seeing the fool, speaking like this thought in her mind:

174b-179a. 'Is this fool, of wicked acts, named Praceṣṭa, written on my forehead (i.e. destined to be my husband)? Oh, I am doomed. Where are my mother, my father, and Vidyādhara —the groom? This one has brought me. Fie upon this doing of the creator! In the world people always fully entertain pride. (But) the creator knows (how) to cut the tree of pride with the axe of exertion. Yet the prudent have recommended four ways out of a calamity: courage, fearlessness coming after that (etc.).' Mentally observing like this, the maiden, expert in all acts, spoke to Praceṣṭa with words of soft letters:

Sulocanā said:

179b-183a. O hero, make your mind steady. I am an unmarried girl. Having embraced me, O wicked-minded one, how will you go? O hero, accept me in marriage (performed) according to the manner laid down in the holy texts. I shall serve you as your maid. What doubt is there? You are my life, my friend, my ornament, and my kinsman. Do you not know that women have no other resort (than their husbands)? Bring objects fit for marriage for (our) marriage. Quickly accept my hand, O you lazy one.

183b-185. Having heard her words, tough within but soft without like a badari-fruit, the fool was very much delighted. The wicked-minded one, putting the maiden at a place on the horse, came to that city to fetch the marriage-string fastened round the wrist. Having thus recommended the rite to him, she thought:

186-194. 'Since the fool, being delighted, and leaving me, has gone what should I do now? Where should I go now? Where should I stay now? How shall I protect myself from this great peril? If I stay here, what then will they (i.e. people) say? Going

to a holy place, and with a desire for a birth in the other world, I shall meet death, since it will promote my happiness. Remembering me even for a moment, this fool, so also the Vidyādhara and Mādhava—the three—will not survive. If I live, their life will be preserved. If I die, all the three will die. When these men will cast their life for me, then I shall indeed be responsible for their death. Now at the holy places lord Viṣṇu should be worshipped. When he is pleased, all happiness will come to me. When life perishes, everything will perish. When it remains everything will be accomplished bit by bit. Does not a very beautiful lotus plant that has survived (during) the night, obtain the union with an excellent bee with a mass of fragrant flowers, when the sun with hot rays has put away the moon?'

195-196. O best among the wise, having thus thought in her heart, that beautiful lady mounted upon that very speedy horse, and went to practise penance at the meeting-place of the Ocean and Gaṅgā. In that excellent, auspicious holy place, the meeting place of Gaṅgā and the Ocean, lived a king, named Suṣeṇa, born in the family of Soma (the moon).

197-200. She thought in her mind to go to that king's assembly: (She thought): 'How should I, a young lady, see the king? Around my wrist are (tied) the marriage-threads along with dūrvā grass. I am a young maiden without any company, and mounted upon horse. Indeed my behaviour will cause wonder in one's mind. Concealing myself (i.e. my true nature) I shall go to the king's assembly.' With magical power she became one of (i.e. turned herself into) the figure of a man. O Jaimini, she entered the king's assembly, like that of the assembly of gods.

201. Seeing him (i.e. Sulocanā in a man's garb), an affluent one, having a (missile called) śakti in his hand, seated upon a horse, coming (to him), the king himself asked him: "Who are you? Whence have you come?"

202-204. Having heard these words of him, that maiden in a man's figure, saluted the friendly king, the refuge of the good people. "O lord, I am a king's son, named Vīravara. I have now come to your kingdom for my livelihood. I shall accomplish whatever mission is impossible to be accomplished. When I am there, my lord will be nowhere defeated."

CHAPTER SIX

Happy End of the Story of Mādhava and Sulocanā

Tha king said:

1. O you of large arms, stay here only, in my very auspicious kingdom. I shall undoubtedly look after your livelihood.

2-6. Then, O brāhmaṇa, Vīravara, with his mind set upon serving him, constantly stayed there, in the vicinity of the king. Once in his city, a rhinoceros, named Bhīmanāda, continuously agitated all his subjects, O Jaimini. To kill him, the king angrily sent him. Then Vīravara, with people, went to kill that rhinoceros. That powerful (Vīravara) saw that rhinoceros, of the size of a mountain, with his mouth fearful due to the fangs, sleeping on the ground. Making his horse move in the atmosphere that Vīravara angrily spoke to the rhinoceros with a voice deep like that of a cloud:

7-10. "O wicked one, those trees of sins that you have acquired, have fructified, as trees are when they reach the (proper) season (i.e. in the proper season). In Yama's abode you will see all the beings which you, the sinful one, had devoured in this kingdom. O wicked one, abandon your sleep. Look at me, your killer. What is the use of this sleep to you? You will have 'the great sleep' (i.e. death)." Then that very powerful one also, with eyes red due to anger, with his entire body greyish due to dust, abandoned his sleep and got up.

Bhīmanāda said:

11-13. O wicked one, do not be proud. (Very little) has remained (of the span) of your life. Who is free just on seeing me? As a moth would enter the row of the flames of a burning fire, so you will fall into the heap of (i.e. the large) fire of my anger.

He (i.e. Vīravara), looking at him who was talking like this, uttered a 'hum' sound and burnt him with great anger.

14-15. Then the rhinoceros, shaking the entire earth, and full of (i.e. making) a thunder-like noise, fell dead on the ground.

O brāhmaṇa, seeing the rhinoceros fallen (dead) on the shore (of the place of the union) of Gaṅgā and the Ocean, he proceeded to go in the vicinity of (i.e. to) the king.

16-18. O brāhmaṇa sage, while going he saw on the path a noble (man) blazing with lustre, and as it were another sun. (He was) accompanied by Viṣṇu's messengers, (was) adorned with tulasī-garlands, wore divine garments, was riding in a celestial chariot, and had a smiling face. That Vīravara thus asked him with devotion: "Who are you? Whence have you come? Where are you going? Tell it to us."

The man said:

19-23. O girl who has put on a man's dress, listen to my account. If you desire to hear it, I shall gladly tell it. Formerly I was a king, wild fire of the family of the Caura dynasty. I was known as Dharmabuddhi, devoted to all religious practices. I performed all sacrifices; (gave) all (kinds of) presents. I protected the earth for fourteen thousand years. By (i.e. on listening to) the words of a heretic, I being angry, seized the land of a brāhmaṇa, which was never (before) polluted. Due to that offence of me, Viṣṇu himself angrily took away just at that moment all my royal glory.

24-32. O good lady, I whose wealth was lost, whose mind was burnt by the fire of grief, was subdued by king Yama within a few days. Seeing me, Citragupta brought that action of me to light. He said to the lord, god Yama, Sun's son, of a charming smile and gait: "This is king Dharmabuddhi. He has always done meritorious acts. He has (committed) some sin. Hear it. I shall tell it. Advised by heretics, he took away the royal grant of a brāhmaṇa. Due to that act only, he will have a place in the hell, difficult to be crossed. O Sun's son, he who cuts off the livelihood of a person is guilty of (the sin of committing) his murder. This is decided in the holy texts. Therefore, this king, the killer of a brāhmaṇa, is a sinner. His place is in hell for the period of a hundred crores of kalpas. O king, he who would snatch the land given by himself, or by someone else, goes to (and stays in) hell along with a crore (members) of his family. No atonement for him who would take away the land of a deity or a brāhmaṇa is seen for a period of hundred crores of kalpas. He who protects

the land given by others, obtains religious merit which is a crore times more than that of the giver."

33-37. Then by Yama's order I ate pus and earth and always committed harm to beings in (my) existence (as a rhinoceros) in (this) kalpa. I, a wicked one, killed thousands of crores cows, brāhmaṇas and other beings also. O good lady, impelled by Yama, you killed me, born in the stock of the rhinoceros, and having no abode. The holy place of the union of Gaṅgā and the Ocean is difficult to be obtained even by gods; dying on even a dry ground there, will give me liberation. O you of large buttocks, go. You will undoubtedly get happiness. You will soon see your husband.

Vyāsa said:

38-40. Having heard those very wonderful words of him, the maiden saluted his feet. The king Dharmabuddhi then got into a chariot and went to heaven. O brāhmaṇa, that hero Vīravara also went to the king's assembly. And the king having learnt that the fiercely valorous rhinoceros was dead, gave him (i.e. Vīravara) his daughter Jayantī in marriage.

41-43. Having accepted that girl Jayantī, (Vīravara) in a man's form decided to practise penance at (the place of) the union of Gaṅgā and the Ocean. O best brāhmaṇa, having bathed in the morning at (the place of) the union of Gaṅgā and the Ocean, she would worship lord Nārāyaṇa with songs, musical instruments and dances. O best brāhmaṇa, that excellent lady, ate fleshless food fit to be eaten during days of fast or ate fruits, or sometime fasted also.

44-47. (Praceṣṭa thought:) 'Who, seeing her all alone, has seized her on the earth? (Or) has that excellent lady, finding me to be (a) mean (man), mounted upon the horse and gone to her kingdom? Is that princess dead due to the separation of Mādhava or of Vidyādhara, since she would not resort to any other man?' That servant, Praceṣṭa, on her death (i.e. taking her to be dead), went at will. He very much lamented there and grieved very much. Desiring to die he came to (the place of) the union of Gaṅgā and the Ocean.

48. Having bathed at (the place of) the union of Gaṅgā and the Ocean, and having adorned himself with the earth (from the

root) of a tulasī-plant, Praceṣṭa, after having joined the palms of his hands, said these (words) to (Gaṅgā) Bhīṣma's mother:

49. "O mother, I shall now cast my body into your pure water, so that you will make Sulocanā my wife."

50-58. Her servants took him who was repeatedly speaking like this, after binding him with a noose, to the learned assembly. The very fierce servants tormented Praceṣṭa by Vīravara's order and put him who was alarmed, into a prison. O best brāhmaṇa, at this time only on this wonderful deed being seen, there was a very loud wailing in his kingdom. O best brāhmaṇa, having heard about this wonderful deed, that king Guṇākara, who was inflamed, came there and said this (?). O best brāhmaṇa, at that time the king, overcome by grief, put at every place in the city, men with quivers, warriors who fight from a chariot, soldiers armed with shields, with swords, bowmen, lancers in thousands of crores for protection. All the warriors of unlimited valour, ordered by him, quickly and angrily stood in the city to protect their lord. Through fear, all singers abandoned (singing) songs, dancer abandoned dances, musicians abandoned (their) musical instruments. Then, O brāhmaṇa-sage, the king called his ministers, and, with his mind overpowered by grief, asked them: "What is this?"

The ministers said:

59. O lord, this is a wonderful action. It was never seen nor heard of before. Where has he gone when so many men were seeing (him)?

60-61. Someone said: "Having come to the earth due to Lakṣmī's curse, she, of her own accord, has vanished in your palace." "That lovely lady, full of tricks, lived in your house through trickery. Having shown her trick, she has gone," thus said others.

62. Others said: "The lovely lady, endowed with all (auspicious) marks, will come again also from where Indra, of an excellent body (comes, i.e. from heaven)."

63. Some said: "Thinking her face to be like himself, the Moon took her to be himself and took her for observing her well."

64-65. Some said: "That virtuous lady, having long clothes, and with her face resembling the full moon, has been erroneously seized by the Moon. She, with a face like a blooming lotus, with bud-like breasts and lotus-stalk-like open hands with the fingers spread, has been (struck) by quarter-elephants, mistaking her for a lotus-plant."

66. Some said: "Having created her having beauty and excellences, the Creator took her to create, after seeing her, another lady like her, O king."

67. Some said: "O king, you have conquered all the quarters. She has gone to heaven to vanquish divine ladies by her beauty."

68. The ministers having thus looked at one another's face, became silent, inactive, and nervous.

69-71. The king saying, "O Sulocanā, leaving me, where have you gone?" fell unconscious on the ground. O best brāhmaṇa, seeing the king fallen (unconscious), there was a loud wailing due to grief in that city. There was an echo of the wailing, O brāhmaṇa. There was a conjecture among the people there that the quarters were crying.

72. All the ministers took the king whose body was greyish due to dust and whose hair was loose, and quickly went to the palace.

73. Then that Vidyādhara, born of Śrī Vikramadeva, embraced her seat and wept with a piteous sound:

74-77. "O dear one, O you having tremulous eye-corners, O you having the lustre of a golden flower, O you of a charming face, where have you gone after dropping me into the ocean of grief? O dear one, what fault of me, did you, the faultless one, note, that you, O you having a lotus-like face, O you good one, are not appearing before me? O good one, even for a moment I shall not live without you. Therefore, appear before me, and save my life. If I do not obtain you, superior even to my life, (then) O good one, what is the use of wealth, people, friends, riches or home to me?"

78-79. O brāhmaṇa sage, having uttered such and other very piteous words, he, deciding to die due to his grief, went to (the place of) the union of Gaṅgā and the Ocean. There he bathed in the Gaṅgā-water mixed with the water of the Ocean,

offered oblation to the Sun and saluted mother (Gaṅgā, and said):

80-82. "O Gaṅgā, O goddess, O mother, I am casting my body in your pure water. You will do that by which I shall again get her." Then, O brāhmaṇa, the angry, excellent servants of Vīravara, took him to the law fit for him. Then Vīravara said (to him): "Who are you? Wherefrom have you come? Why do you cast your body here? Tell it to me."

83-88. Having heard these words of him, that Vidyādhara told the entire story, causing wonder to the listeners. "And there is no doubt that you are the greatest among the foolish people. That maiden was a female gandharva, a demoness, a female serpent or a female kinnara. She had come (to the earth), as it were, through a curse. Therefore, she vanished of her own accord. That maiden of the form of a deity went to the abode of gods. How can you see her again? Can the wicked crows, though powerful, drink the moon's nectar, fit to be drunk by the cakoras (only). What cannot be obtained can never be obtained. Whatever is fit to be obtained is (alone) obtained (by people). Some people know this; (and so) they are not deluded. A daughter is given (in marriage) by someone, and accepted by someone.

89-94. A groom gets that girl (as his wife) who was such a girl in his former life (also). The purpose of (having) a wife is to have sons. The purpose of (having) a son is (to receive) piṇḍas (from him at the śrāddha ceremony). For this purpose only the wise take a wife. A woman gets as is given by her in this world. The humming bee would put up with a lotus-creeper during the night. (But) even a handsome husband would not please women. Even though the sun is there a bee would drink the honey (from the lotuses) of a lotus-creeper. For a man (these) are matters for laughter: always thinking about women, indifferent to devotion for Viṣṇu, and casting the body (i.e. committing suicide) due to certain afflictions. All these, viz. the wife, the sons, the brother, the country (of one's birth), the kinsmen can be obtained again. But life cannot be had again. You did not give up the objects of senses. You did not do pious acts.

95-98a. O fool, when the present (existence) has gone the future existence is difficult to secure. Due to the sense of mineness, viz. (this is) my mother, (this is) my father, this is my wife,

my wealth, the life of men becomes fruitless." O Jaimini, thus admonished properly by that Vīravara, he gave up his dejection and remained there only. Then that female perfumer, laughing (herself) went home. And having gone (home), she saw Mādhava, who was asleep.

The female perfumer said:

98b-99. Get up, get up, O wicked-minded one. Your roaming about would be useless. That maiden has disappeared of her own accord at the time of her marriage."

Hearing her words like these, that Mādhava got up.

100-101. Being overcome by great grief, he rolled on the ground. (He said to himself:) "It is not the fault of the girl, nor of Vidyādhara. It is entirely my fault only, since I had the company of the mean. The Creator does not give happiness to men when they have the company of the mean.

102-111. I have realised just this, since this is my fate. Even a great (being) does not at all obtain happiness in the company of the mean: Śiva became naked, and had broken (pieces of objects) as his ornaments, due to his contact with evil spirits. A mean man, entering a hiding place, longs for a woman, riches etc. Having had some attachment Kārtikeya became six-faced. A mean man, having heard about the virtue of the good, instantly sinks down. He goes to listen to a fault which then would become of a hundred forms. A wise man, desiring his good, should not go to the mean. Even for a moment a wise man should not go to the mean. A wise man does not move even a step with the mean. He who takes the words of the mean to be reliable, instantly sinks down. If he gets to listen to a fault, he carefully comes to listen to it. Then getting an opportunity, he, laughing loudly, manifests it. Those whose minds are controlled, have one (i.e. the same) thing in their mind, in their speech and in their action. (But) the wicked have one thing in mind, another in their speech and (still) another in their action. When that girl, that princess will marry, then there will not be the slightest affliction in my mind. (So also I shall not be sorry) if the girl, endowed with all (good) marks, has gone to heaven. (If) she is taken away by the mean (Pracesṭa), then there would be unbearable

grief in my mind. I am seeing her, of an excellent face, as it were, drawn in a picture at every place.

112-118a. I who am alive, cannot forget her. If the good lady has gone to the bosom of the mean one (i.e. is held in his bosom by the mean one), then she will not live (even) for a moment. Due to the intense grief on her account, that Vidyādhara also will not live. To secure her I had left my country as I had left my mother and my father. Undoubtedly I should cast my life like that only. To obtain her again, I shall abandon my life at (the place of) the union of Gaṅgā and the Ocean." Making such a firm decision, he proceeded to go. At this time only, that very intelligent Mādhava, after having obtained the unguent for the feet from the best sage Nārada, went to (i.e. reached) (the place of) the union of Gaṅgā and the Ocean, after a few days. Having bathed in the water at (the union of) the Gaṅgā with the Ocean, he worshipped Viṣṇu. Then Mādhava, adorned with the garlands of tulasī-leaves, and with the palms of his hands joined, said to that best river, Jahnu's daughter:

Mādhava said:

118b-122a. O goddess, I, who am suffering grief, shall abandon my body. You will give that beautiful girl to me (as my wife) in my next birth.

Having spoken like this, and having saluted Gaṅgā, the mother of the three worlds, he proceeded to get into the deep water (of the river). O brāhmaṇa sage, Vīravara seized the prince by his back, and having speedily come, along with his men to the (king's) assembly, and resorting to love (i.e. affectionately) looked at the prince of praiseworthy beauty. Then he, being asked by Vīravara, "Who are you? How (i.e. why) do you cast your body here?" said to Vīravara:

Mādhava said:

122b-127. I am the son of king Vikrama, named Mādhava. Once I, along with my army, went for hunting to a fierce forest. In the vicinity of the city there was a lake beautiful due to lotuses. I who was lustful, saw there a lonely, beautiful woman. That beautiful woman, named Candrakalā, made a reference of

Sulocanā (as living) on the earth to me, overcome by passion of love. Then mounting upon a horse, and crossing the ocean, I, along with my servant called Praceṣṭa, went to that city. On that day only the excellent (rite of the) application of perfumes etc. (as a preliminary to the marriage-rite) to her (was to take place). Hearing that I sent (her) a ring. What she also wrote on the back of the excellent letter, sent along with the ring by me, is told (now):

128-130. "O best one, there is the son of king Śrī Trivikramadeva, called Vidyādhara. My father will give me to him in marriage. (The right of) the application of perfumes etc. will take place today; and my marriage will certainly take place tomorrow. Yet I shall tell you the means by which you (can) obtain me. I (shall) remain with my left hand raised, and facing the bridegroom. He, who can take me is undoubtedly my husband."

131. Having written that letter the maiden gave it into the hand of the female perfumer. That female perfumer also gave that excellent letter to me.

132-133. Praceṣṭa, facing me, heard about the condition, and, mounting on the horse, took her (away). I was overcome by sleep. Listen, due to this affliction, (and) in order to secure her again, I am keeping awake according to the manner (laid down in the scriptures), O good one.

134-139. Thus addressed, that maiden, in a man's form, appointed many foot-soldiers for his protection, and she, laughing, went to the harem. Then, having put on a woman's dress and adorned with various ornaments, she sent her maid-servant to fetch the prince. Having come (to the harem) by her order, the prince saw that chaste lady, as it were, Lakṣmī incarnate. That girl, with her body graced with horripilation, got up from the golden seat, and saluted his feet, O brāhmaṇa. Then that very intelligent prince, securing the marriage-thread there only, married the girl according to the gandharva-type of marriage. That prince sprinkled with the streams of the water of her love and sporting with her, passed the night there only.

140-145. Then when the day broke that chaste lady having eyes like those of a female deer, told Mādhava the whole account from the beginning. Then that chaste Sulocanā, taking that

princess Jayantī and Mādhava, went to Suṣeṇa's assembly. Hearing (from) the girl (the account), the king, being delighted, gave to him in marriage Sulocanā and Jayantī. That king, highly devoted to piety and very much pleased, gave him as the dowry half of his kingdom and hundreds (of coins) of gold. Then that prince, having fashioned a beautiful house, lived in that most holy place, O brāhmaṇa. Then, in the meanwhile, Mādhava, having brought Praceṣṭa, kept in the prison, to the assembly, thought:

146-149. 'I shall not protect this evil-minded, cruel man, treacherous to his master, this fool, the greatest enemy. A cruel man, though protected repeatedly with constant favour, wealth and food, acts like an enemy, when he gets an opportunity. (Such) a man, after reaching prosperity, would cut off the head of the master with the same hand with which, in adversity, he would carry the dust of the (master's) feet. The subjugated rows of kings do indeed kill their lord. Even hot water would instantly put out fire.'

150-154. O best brāhmaṇa, thinking like this in his mind, that prince drove out that insensible Praceṣṭa. O brāhmaṇa, with those two ladies, he, free from grief and malady, lived happily there for sometime. On that Sulocanā (the wife) of that magnanimous Mādhava a hundred sons were born; and two hundred sons were born on Jayantī. Those sons of Mādhava also were very proficient in the science of (using) weapons, were highly devoted to piety and became dear to the people. That Mādhava, associated with Viṣṇu's devotion secured in the former existence, once thought in his mind:

155-159. 'Who am I? Whence have I come? To whom do I belong? Who created me? Where shall I go again (after death)? Where shall I stay? The life of me, enjoying objects of senses, has passed without any religious merit. So, who will save me who am plunged in the ocean of perils. That man who, having taken birth in this mundane existence, has not propitiated Viṣṇu, should be known to be the killer of himself and one that is excommunicated. Birth would repeatedly take place, so also death would take place again and again. Therefore, this mundane existence is said to be very fierce and causing affliction. Without devotion for Viṣṇu birth and death would not be kept

off. Therefore, today, having abandoned everything, I shall worship Viṣṇu.'

160. Having thought like this in his mind, and having repeatedly trusted (Viṣṇu), he called Viśvakarman, and said these words to him:

Mādhava said:

161-167. O Viśvakarman, O you of big arms, having fashioned a stone-image of Viṣṇu, giving all desired objects, give it to me.

Then, O brāhmaṇa, by his order, the artisan Viśvakarman fashioned a stone-image of the great Viṣṇu. It was dark like a fresh cloud. Its eyes resembled lotuses. It held a conch, a disc, a mace and a lotus. It had four arms. It was united with Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī. It was adorned with a garland of wood-flowers. It possessed all (good) marks. It was adorned with all ornaments. Having installed that image of Viṣṇu, giving desired objects and having a disc in its hand, in a beautiful pavilion, he started worshipping it. O brāhmaṇa, O best brāhmaṇa, in the same abode he would everyday offer a ghee-lamp with continuous flame. He would himself bathe in the morning, and would sweep (the hall) etc. He would decorate the path, and would smear it (with cowdung).

168-171. Having bathed in the water at (the place of the union of) Gaṅgā and the Ocean, and having offered the five great sacrifices, he would worship Viṣṇu thrice (a day) with excellent offerings, with sandal, incense, with offerings of eatables, tāmbūlas, incense and lamps, so also with songs and musical instruments, discourses, and excellent repetitions of hymns, so also by means of going round the image, keeping it to his right, with salutations, and sacrifices in which presents were given, so also with fleshless food fit to be eaten during days of fast, and by eating fruits. He would mutter the great (prayer) formula of eight letters, viz. 'Salutation to Nārāyaṇa' preceded by Oṁ (*Oṃ namo Nārāyaṇāya*), and giving all desired objects.

172-174. In this way for thousands of years he very devoutly performed the worship, giving all desired objects, of the noble Viṣṇu, the highest soul. By means of that devotion, (Viṣṇu) the

crest-jewel of all gods was pleased. The lord, resembling a tulasī-sprout, appeared before him. Seeing Viṣṇu who had appeared before him, Mādhava along with his wives embraced (i.e. touched) the ground with his head, and saluted Viṣṇu's feet.

Mādhava said:

175-190. Salutation to the god of gods. Salutation to the highest soul. Salutation to the highest lord, to the lord of gods; salutation to the giver of knowledge. Salutation to you, O highest joy, O Puruṣottama, O Keśava. Salutation to the lotus-eyed one, to the lord of Lakṣmī. Salutation to you of many forms; repeated salutations to the formless one. Salutation to the conceivable one, to the inconceivable one, to the visible one, and the invisible one. Salutation to the lord of the three worlds; repeated salutations to the father of the worlds. Salutation to the one obtainable by knowledge; salutation to you belonging to all Vedas. Salutation to you, the enemy of Kaṁsa. Salutation to you, the enemy of Kaiṭabha. Salutation to you who seized Madhu; repeated salutations to you, the creator, who taking the form of the Fish, extracted the Vedas. Repeated salutations to you. I resort to you who, in the form of the Tortoise, extracted the Earth along with mountains, forests and groves, from inside the water of the deep ocean. Repeated salutations to you who, in the form of the Boar, held up, with your tusk, the Earth, O lord of the Earth. Salutations to you who, in the form of Nṛsiṁha, tore off the angry demon Hiraṇyakaśipu. O god, salutation to you who, in the form of Vāmana, destroyed Bali's sacrifice, and seized (the earth) for Kaśyapa. Salutation to you, that Rāma (i.e. Paraśurāma) who gratified your manes with the blood of the kṣatriyas and who killed Kārtavīrya. Salutation to you, that (Dāśarathi) Rāma, the son of Kauśalyā, who killed Rāvaṇa, so also Mārīca and Kumbhakarṇa. Salutation to you, that (Bala)Rāma, Revatī's husband, who killed Pralamba, and who cleared the Kālindī (i.e. the Yamunā). Salutation to you that Buddha who, seeing the killing of beasts, censured the Vedas with compassion (for the beasts). Salutation to you, of the form of Kalki, who at the end of the yuga killed* the Mlecchas for the

***vihitā* is a misprint for *vihatā*.

good of all people. O Hari, O Viṣṇu, O conqueror of the demons, O Nārāyaṇa full of pity, save me who am fallen into the fierce ocean of the worldly existence.

191-193. Then that Mādhava washed Viṣṇu's feet through joy, and dropping his entire body on the ground, spoke to Viṣṇu:

Mādhava said:

O Govinda, O you highest joy, O Mukunda, O Madhusūdana, O Kṛṣṇa, protect me, a sinner, since you destroy all sins.

Having heard this hymn of praise of him, the lord, affectionate to (his devotees), being very much pleased, himself said these words:

The lord said:

194. O dear, O Mādhava, O best kṣatriya, choose a boon. What do you desire—the state of Brahman, Śiva, or Śakra?

Mādhava said:

195-196. O lord of the world, I have obtained everything. There is no doubt about it. I am seeing you who are invisible even to deities. You are capable of giving enjoyment, salvation, wealth, prosperity—everything. O lord, I am not fit for devotion. Give me devotion only.

The lord said:

197. I am undoubtedly pleased with this devotion of you. Tell me by giving which thing I shall be free from your debt.

Sūta said:

198. O brāhmaṇa, saying so, Viṣṇu who was very much pleased, spread his four arms and embraced him as a father embraces his son.

The lord said:

199-200. Due to the power of the embrace I am acquitted of the debt. O good one, everything will undoubtedly be auspicious. O child, by you having a desire my image was worshipped by means of the yoga of action.

Vyāsa said:

201-204. Having thus given him a boon and having embraced him with his four long arms dear as life, he vanished there only. Then Mādhava, along with his wife, devoutly worshipped that image of Viṣṇu by means of the yoga of action. Along with his sons and grandsons he enjoyed all pleasures. And having met his death along with his wife in Gaṅgā, he obtained liberation. He who with full devotion, recites this chapter containing Viṣṇu's account, destroying all heaps of sins, enjoys all pleasures in this world, and ultimately goes to the abode of lord Śrī Vāsudeva.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Kālakalpa is Liberated by the Touch of Gaṅgā-water

Śrī Vyāsa said:

1-4. I shall just again tell you the excellent importance of Gaṅgā; having heard it all men would obtain all their desired objects. On seeing the face of him who has not bathed in Gaṅgā, the mother of the world, a man should instantly look at the Sun. The sins of him who, in the morning, would devoutly remember the couple of letters 'Gaṅ-gā', perish, as darkness perishes at dawn. All the food, water etc. of (i.e. offered by) him who has not seen the best among rivers, are unfit to be accepted.

5-9. The sins of those who bathe in Gaṅgā leave their bodies and go to the bodies of those who do not bathe in Gaṅgā. Oh, very, very strange it is that fools fall into a hell, (though) there is the name of Gaṅgā (to purify them). That brāhmaṇa

who would carry even a drop of the Gaṅgā-water on his head is freed from great sins like the murder of a brāhmaṇa. That meritorious man, on whose forehead an excellent mark made with the Gaṅgā-sand is seen, undoubtedly purifies the entire world. That man who would see (a man) who has come from the bank of Gaṅgā with great respect, obtains the fruit of thousands of horse-sacrifices.

10. Viṣṇu is pleased with him and gives him all his desired objects who says (to another man): "I am going to the bank of Gaṅgā. You (too) come (with me)".

11-13. That man who, remembering the name Gaṅgā, bathes even in the water of a well, would obtain the fruit of a bath in Gaṅgā. He who, at the time of death, gets a drop of the Gaṅgā-water equal (to the size of) a mustard, would go to the highest position. O brāhmaṇa sage, in this context only listen to an ancient account, by merely hearing which goddess Gaṅgā is pleased.

14-17. In the Tretā age there was a brāhmaṇa by name Dharmasva. He was righteous, calm, controlled, full of pity and had mastered the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas. He spoke the truth, was without anger and free from harming (anyone); he had controlled his senses; he desired the good of all beings; he was always engaged in abstract meditation. To cross the ocean of the mundane existence, that devotee of Viṣṇu worshipped Keśava, the lord of gods, by means of the yoga of action (i.e. religious deeds). Sometime, finding an auspicious day, that best brāhmaṇa, desiring liberation, went to the bank of Gaṅgā to bathe, O brāhmaṇa.

18-24. Having bathed there in the Gaṅgā-water, and having presented libations of water etc. to the manes, he, carrying pitchers of the Gaṅgā-water, decided to go home. O brāhmaṇa, at that time a vaiśya called Ratnakara, surrounded by all his servants, came back after finishing trade. He had a brāhmaṇa servant known as Kālakalpa. He who had committed all (kinds of) sins, came (there) with a staff in his hand. O best brāhmaṇa, one ox of that Ratnakara, fatigued due to the journey, slept on the road. That very cruel Kālakalpa, seeing the bull lying on the path, struck him with the staff in various ways. Due to anger produced by the strokes of the staff, the bull got up and tore him with his very sharp horns. His chest was torn out by the

couple of horns, and he (also) lost his sight. Dharmasva, full of pity, quickly went near him.

25-26. Then that intelligent one (i.e. Dharmasva) took an excellent tulasī-leaf from his ear, and sprinkled him with the divine drops of the water of Gaṅgā. O best brāhmaṇa, seeing him dead, he, the knower of the most sublime truth, was amazed, and decided to go home.

27-32. Then going along the path while repeating the names of Gaṅgā, he saw before him, thousands of crores of Yama's messengers. Some of them had one of their legs cut off. Some of them had one of their hands cut off. The ears of some were cut off. Some had one ear only. Some had their noses cut off. Some had their tongues cut off. The teeth of some were broken. Some were without teeth. The entire bodies of some were smeared with streams of blood. Some had their hair loose. Some had lost their mouths. Similarly some of them were naked. The chests of some were pierced. The bodies of some were disabled with very sharp arrows. Others had their fingers and hands tied with strong cords. Others wailing due to agony, were intent on running (away).

33-34. That best brāhmaṇa, seeing Yama's servants reduced to such a state, had his heart trembling, and through fear he was a little motionless. Then mustering courage, that brāhmaṇa, a devotee of Viṣṇu, asked thus with sweet (voice) the savage servants of Yama.

Dharma(sva) said:

35-36. Who are you of deformed figures and having nooses and hammers in your hands, with your mouthsfierce due to fangs and resembling charcoal? All you have eyes like very powerfully burning fire. Yet, someone has reduced you to this bad plight.

Yama's messengers said:

37. We all are Yama's messengers, always carrying out Yama's order. This very great sin has come to us with great chastisement (as its fruit).

Dharmasva said:

38. You, of great power and valour, have come all of a

sudden. Who has reduced you, and how has he reduced you to such a very bad plight?

Yama's messengers said:

39-46. O best brāhmaṇa, give up your fear. Listen to the whole account, since this agony of us has become extremely unbearable. We, the servants, have been sent forth by Yama to carry this Kālakalpa who has been torn with his horns by a bull. Ordered by him (i.e. Yama), all of us, with all weapons in our hands have come here to take the greatest of sinners after tying him. This wicked-hearted Kālakalpa whose death was imminent, was torn with his horns by the bull who became the cause (of his death). You, being kind, repeating the names of Gaṅgā, sprinkled the greatest of sinners with the drops of the water of Gaṅgā. Though his sins had gone due to his being sprinkled with the drops of water, we, binding him strongly with cords, exerted to take him (to Yama's abode). The lord of gods, the protector of those who have sought his refuge, also sent his very powerful and valorous messengers to take him (to Vaikuṇṭha). O best brāhmaṇa, certain messengers then came by Viṣṇu's order and angrily said these words to us on the path:

Viṣṇu's messengers said:

47-49. O noble ones, who are you? How do you take this noble-minded one after binding him with a cord? Whose servants are you? Leaving this noble one, run (away) as you please. Otherwise we shall cut off your heads with the edge of (our) discs.

O best brāhmaṇa, having heard these proud words of them, the servants of Viṣṇu, we said to them:

50-53. "We all are the servants of Yama, the lord of (every) life. Taking this greatest sinner we are going to Yama's abode. All you noble ones are adorned with the garlands of tulasī-blossoms. Your eyes are like full-blown lotuses. You are strong, and are Garuḍa-bannered. You have put on divine garments. You are handsome like the peacock's neck. You are holding conches, discs, maces and lotuses. You (each) have four arms. Who are all of you, endowed with all (auspicious) marks? How do you desire to take this greatest sinner?"

Viṣṇu's messengers said:

54-55. All of us are Viṣṇu's messengers. To take this meritorious man to Vaikuṇṭha we have come here now. O servants of Yama, if you desire to live, then quickly release this our man, Viṣṇu's devotee, free from sins.

56-63. O brāhmaṇa, listen to the words we angrily uttered on hearing these words of them, addressed to all. I (shall) tell them. "This one is a sinner, of a bad conduct. He has committed thousands of murders of brāhmaṇas. He is ungrateful. He is the killer of cows, (his) friends, and is evil-hearted. This extremely wicked one has snatched very many (pieces of) gold of the size of the Meru (mountain). He has always kidnapped others' wives. O servants of Viṣṇu, he has committed thousands of crores of murders of living beings in various ways, so also murders of women. Everyday he snatched the deposits kept with him; he committed incest with his mother and ate cow's flesh also. He killed others and set fire to others' houses. He censured others in an assembly, and caused abortions of widows. He, resembling a Yavana, killed at night with sharp swords a guest that had come to his house through greed for wealth, O best one. This mean fool has committed innumerable sins (like) these and other great sins. He has not done even a little producing auspiciousness.

64. Therefore, this great sinner is being taken to the house of torture. O best ones, the sinners are known to be punished by Yama.

65. If you are the messengers of the lord, the god of gods, then how do you wish to take this greatest sinner (to Vaikuṇṭha)?"

Viṣṇu's messengers said:

66-72. You have spoken the truth only. There is no doubt about it. All sinners are always to be punished by the lord of beings. (But) this one is free from sins due to his being sprinkled with the drops of the water of Gaṅgā. Therefore, we all shall take him to Viṣṇu's abode. Till the drops of Gaṅgā-water, very difficult to be secured, do not touch the bodies of men, sins remain in their bodies. As by just one digit of the moon entire darkness is removed, in the same way sin is destroyed by a drop

of Gaṅgā-water. By (merely) remembering the names of Gaṅgā a sinner is freed from his sins. What wonder is there if he is freed on actually seeing her water? Even the cold Gaṅgā-water is like fire to the forest of sins, as cold water acts like fire in the case of a lotus-pond. Therefore, this one is a meritorious man, as it were, another Viṣṇu. O servants of Yama, if you desire your well-being, (then) go (back).

73-76. Listen to what we again said, after laughing loudly on hearing these words of those messengers of Viṣṇu. "Oh wonder! Oh wonder! that this abode of sins has been freed from all sins just due to the sprinkling of Gaṅgā-water. A mortal is not freed even after hundreds of crores of kalpas, without experiencing (the fruit of) the act, good or bad, done by him. We have come (here) by Yama's order to take him (to Yama). By whose words should we leave this great sinner?"

Viṣṇu's messengers said:

77-80. Since you do not know the merits of the daughter of Jahnu (i.e. Gaṅgā), you are evil-minded and devoid of discrimination. That act which is prohibited in (i.e. by) the Veda is said to be a sin. That act approved by the Veda is alone said to be religious. We hear that god Nārāyaṇa is evidently self-born. As Viṣṇu is, so is Gaṅgā. Gaṅgā alone destroys all sins. A bad or a good act is fixed by Viṣṇu with his own hands. When Viṣṇu is pleased, where do men's sins remain?

81-84. You have been reduced to this state due to your sins earned (i.e. committed) in other (i.e. former) existences. O you of sinful acts, why do you even now desire (to commit) sinful acts? You censure Gaṅgā; so also you censure Viṣṇu. Therefore, we shall kill you, the sinful ones, with the edge of our discs.

Speaking like this, O best one, those messengers of Viṣṇu, with their eyes red due to anger, started fighting with us. They angrily said: "Kill (these) messengers of Yama". Repeatedly speaking like this, they struck us with the edge of their discs.

85-87. Speaking like that, all those messengers of Viṣṇu, very fierce in battle, and being delighted at heart, suddenly blew their conches. Then, O brāhmaṇa, the three worlds were perva-

ded by our lion-like roars, like thunderings of clouds, and by our bows being expanded (i.e. strung). Then with trees, stones and showers of rocks, we split those messengers of Viṣṇu.

88-91. In that ocean (of the battle) the messengers of Viṣṇu variously struck us with missiles like double-edged swords, small javelins, arrows, so also clubs studded with iron, axes, knives, staffs and darts, swords, (missiles called) śakti, sharp arrows, maces, edges of discs, and very fierce arrows of iron, and with fearful missiles. Then all of us wounded by the missiles ran away through fear. Thousands of us fell dead in the battle.

92-96. Then those mighty servants of Viṣṇu, seeing us intent on fleeing, joyfully blew their conches. Then cutting off the bond of Kālakalpa, and putting him into an aeroplane, they went to the lord's city, O best brāhmaṇa. O best one, due to the efficacy of the sprinkling of the drops (of the water) of Gaṅgā, that very sinful Kālakalpa obtained residence in the same heaven with Viṣṇu. Having lived there for a hundred kalpas, having enjoyed charming pleasures, and having obtained knowledge there only, he obtained liberation. O lord, due to the efficacy of Gaṅgā, this our affliction has gone. O brāhmaṇa, well-being to you. Being very much pleased, go home.

97. O brāhmaṇa, having spoken like this, those messengers of Yama went to Yama's city. That Dharmasva again went to the bank of Gaṅgā.

98. Having bathed in Gaṅgā, the mother of the world, the brāhmaṇa, with the palms of his hands joined, praised that greatest goddess.

Dharmasva said:

99-112. O Gaṅgā, O mother of the entire world, O you of unsteady ripples, O you having the garland of the flowers of the very charming heads of Anaṅga etc., O you who remove the dust on both the lovely feet of the enemy of Kaṁsa, I salute you who destroy sins. O mother, O you who give happiness to all, O you best among the rivers, O you whose merits have been sung by the hosts of brāhmaṇas like Vyāsa, O you rich in virtues, O you, the boat in the fearful, great ocean in the form of the mundane existence, I salute the pair of your feet, which remove sins.

O daughter of Jahnu, with (i.e. by bowing) my head, I salute you, on having whose drop of water the king named Saudāsa, having (committed the sin of) the murder of crores of brāhmaṇas, obtained liberation, difficult to be obtained even by gods. O you giver of boons, be pleased. By your grace let the body of me, repeating the names like Nārāyaṇa, Acyuta, Janārdana, Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, Gaṅgā etc., fall into your water, O goddess, O mother, O you who remove sins in the worldly existence. O goddess of all, what is the use of austerities, muttering (the hymns etc.), (giving) presents, or of sacrifices like the horse-sacrifice? (For) even very sinful men obtain liberation, difficult to be obtained even by gods, on securing a drop of your water. O you highest goddess, O you who are the cause of the creation, maintenance, and destruction of the world, I salute you of the form of the three guṇas, viz. sattva (i.e. goodness), rajas (i.e. passion), and tamas (i.e. darkness or ignorance), who are that Svāhā (i.e. oblation offered indiscriminately to all gods), that Svadhā (i.e. offering of food made to the manes of deceased ancestors) for the great satisfaction of the hosts of gods and manes. May the entire dust from your feet be on the head of me who always wear your sand, and a vertical mark with your clay on my forehead, who would devoutly repeat your name, the abode of all tastes. May my birth remove the tie with the worldly life, after (my) having lived on your bank, O Gaṅgā, after (my) having drunk your water which removes sins, after (my) having recollected your name, and after (my) having seen your water with waves. Looking upon heaven as having a difficult path leading to it, and taking it to be very important, very happy men have a great fear about it. But O giver of nectar, it is indeed in vain, since your water acts as a staircase for going to heaven. O you goddess of all, O you giver of enjoyments, O you Gaṅgā, the chief among rivers, sins, hosts of diseases remain in the bodies (of men) till they do not bathe in your pure water. O you of an uninterrupted flow, that some call you who are the giver of the highest liberation, to reach whose greatness (gods) like Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Śiva and hosts of gods like Indra (try hard), a (simple) river, is their ignorance! O Gaṅgā, O you who give all pleasures, lord Śiva knows a little of your importance, since he, the best of the good-minded, very devoutly holds you, the (only) goddess of the

world, on his head. O Gaṅgā, O goddess, O mother of the world, O highest goddess, nourish me; salutation to you; protect me, your servant. O giver of liberation, can I whose mind is confused, praise you, of the nature of the highest Brahman and the only mother of the world?

Vyāsa said:

113-116. Gaṅgā, the mother of the world, thus praised by the intelligent brāhmaṇa, suddenly appeared before him in an embodied form, O brāhmaṇa. Before him he saw Gaṅgā with two arms, seated on a crocodile, white like a kunda (flower), the moon and a conch, and adorned with all ornaments. Then, he, seeing Gaṅgā before him, saying 'O Gaṅgā, O Gaṅgā,' saluted her after touching the ground with his head. O Jaimini, infatuating him with smiling looks, that highest goddess who was very much pleased, said to him: "O brāhmaṇa, choose a boon."

Dharmasva said:

117-119. O mother, by the touch of your water even the murderer of a brāhmaṇa gets liberation. I am actually seeing you. What else have I to gain? Yet, O highest goddess, I ask for one boon: May I, while recollecting your name, die in your water. O goddess, he who praises you with the hymn composed by me, will, after enjoying all desired objects, obtain a good position in the end.

Gaṅgā said:

120-121. O best brāhmaṇa, by this devotion of you I am pleased. Undoubtedly you will soon have full happiness. Being pleased with the man who would recite this hymn composed by you, three times a day, I shall grant him the excellent liberation.

Vyāsa said:

122-128. That goddess, affectionate to her devotees, having thus given a boon to that (brāhmaṇa) named Dharmasva, vanished there only, O best brāhmaṇa. The brāhmaṇa too, having secured that boon, was as it were fortunate. O brāhmaṇa, he lived there only on the beautiful bank of Gaṅgā. Then after a long time having met a happy death in the pure water of

Gaṅgā, he reached the best position. Even that wicked-minded Kālakalpa, sprinkled with the drops of the Gaṅgā-water, obtained excellent liberation. Then what need one say of others, O brāhmaṇa? The Gaṅgā-water, even though touched unintentionally, gives fruit. I do not know what would happen to those who touch it with devotion. I say repeatedly, there is no other holy place like Gaṅgā, touching a drop of water of which one obtains the highest abode. Those, who devoutly touch in this world just a drop of the water of this excellent river, go to the position of Viṣṇu after being freed from all very fierce sins.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Love Story of Indra and Padmagandhā

Vyāsa said:

1-6. O chief among brāhmaṇas, I shall again narrate the excellent greatness of Gaṅgā. If you desire liberation, drink the nectar in the form of an account of Gaṅgā. He who has devotion for the mother of Bhīṣma, has given all gifts, has performed all sacrifices, and has worshipped Viṣṇu. O Jaimini, whatever religious rites are performed in Gaṅgā, all those become inexhaustible for him. Seeing flowing water he who gets up and goes to the water of Gaṅgā with devotion, is the performer of a thousand horse-sacrifices. He who does not show devotion (i.e. does not become devoted) when Gaṅgā-water has come (to him), will perpetually have beasthood in every existence. The religious merit earned during crores of existences of him who, having come across the Gaṅgā-water, does not devoutly take it, perishes just in a moment.

7-10. He who stops one desiring to go to the bank of Gaṅgā, would, along with a crore (members of) his family, go to Raurava hell. The expiation for him who urinates or excretes on the bank of Gaṅgā is not seen even after hundreds of crores of kalpas. He who would drop phlegm, spittle, rheum, tears or dirt on the bank of Gaṅgā would be a resident of hell. He who would

throw leavings of food and phlegm into Gaṅgā goes to a fearful hell, and gets (the sin of) the murder of a brāhmaṇa.

11-12. The sin which a foolish man commits on the bank of Gaṅgā, would indeed be perpetual and is not destroyed at (i.e. by visiting) other holy places. A sin committed at another holy place is destroyed in Gaṅgā; (but) the sin committed in Gaṅgā is destroyed nowhere.

13-14. Therefore, those who are proficient in the holy texts should not commit a sin in Gaṅgā. They should collect religious merit through (bodily) act, (act of) mind, and through words. They are not countries, they are not mountains, and they are also not the forests where the divine river, destroying sins, would not exist.

15-19. O Jaimini, even if one has (to carry out) a hundred (pieces of) work one should not stay at any other place even for a short while after leaving the bank of Gaṅgā. Even by eating begged food one should stay at the bank of Gaṅgā, but not at other place, even for a moment, even after having obtained the status of a king. By casting his body in Gaṅgā even the killer of a brāhmaṇa is liberated. (But even) the performer of a thousand horse-sacrifices at any other place would not get liberation. He who would live on the bank of Gaṅgā and be devoted to Viṣṇu's worship (would obtain liberation). He who has never worshipped Viṣṇu in any former existence, would not have devotion for Gaṅgā, the mother of the world. O men, all of you listen. I am saying this repeatedly.

20-24 Having bathed in Gaṅgā, he would go to the highest position. That man who would worship Gaṅgā by repeating the name 'Gaṅgā, Gaṅgā', (would) freed from all sins, (live) in heaven for a myriad divine ages. O brāhmaṇa, he who would start (narration of) the account of Gaṅgā at the time of his death, would, with all his sins dropped, go to the abode of Viṣṇu. O best brāhmaṇa, with the wise man who at the time of his death remembers the name 'Gaṅgā' giving liberation, Viṣṇu would be pleased. He who would, at the time of death, have a sectarian mark (on his forehead) of the Gaṅgā-clay (*mṛtpuṇḍra*), so also he who would cast his body after seeing him who bathes in Gaṅgā, would get (the fruit of) death in Gaṅgā even (if his death occurs) in a cremation ground, O brāhmaṇa.

25-26. As long as the bones of a man remain in Gaṅgā, he would, for thousands of kalpas, be honoured in Viṣṇu's heaven. That wise man whose ashes, bones, nails and hair lie dipped in Gaṅgā, would live in Viṣṇu's abode.

27-28. O brāhmaṇa, I shall tell (about) the fate a man has when his bones lie in Gaṅgā. I shall tell the entire fruit of it. Listen attentively. Once the lustful lord Indra, adorned with various ornaments, went along with a young woman Padmagandhā to the pleasure-house.

29-31. She who was called Padmagandhā, who had the prime of youth, contributed to great delight by giving him various pleasures. He, the conqueror, deluded by Cupid and being pleased, sat at the feet of that lady having eyes like those of a young deer, and seated on his wife's golden bed. Indra, being very much pleased and with his mind attracted by her virtues, himself prepared a tāmbūla and gave it to her.

32-33. Just at that time, very beautiful Paulomī, adorned with all ornaments, herself came to that (pleasure-)house. Paulomī, seeing lord Indra, the king of all gods, in that condition, was very angry; and she, of good marks, spoke thus:

Śacī said:

34-37a. O lord, O my husband, O king of all gods, what is this that you are doing? Giving a golden tāmbūla to one who is my maid! O lord, all gods touch your feet with their heads. Then how do you remain at the feet of Padmagandhā? A bee is solicited for its fragrance(?). It would not be its success(?). O lord, how do you, who are the lord of a crore of beautiful women, and who know all flavours, do such an extremely condemned act?

37b-38a. O you virtueless Padmagandhā, O you maid, go away. You, (as if you were) a goddess, are (lying) on the bed, and Indra is seated at your feet!

Vyāsa said:

38b-39a. Thus reproached in various ways by that Paulomī, that chaste woman of a beautiful body angrily spoke thus:

Padmagandhā said:

39b-43a. The lord himself knows my virtue and vice. O

you virtueless one, with what authority are you, after coming (here), censuring me? Others see virtues and vices even with two eyes. O you wicked-minded one, would Indra not see with a thousand eyes, since the virtue of people is not propagated as (as quickly as) their fault? Virtuous people first see the spot on the moon. You are talking nonsense, are cruel, of a bad form, void of virtues. If I am not virtuous, then let your husband resort to you.

Vyāsa said:

43b-44a. Speaking like this, that lotus-eyed Padmagandhā, acting very pitiably, angrily got up from the golden bed.

Indra said:

44b-47a. O dear one, O mistress of my life, O greatest one, leaving me where are you going? Tell me, O beautiful lady, what offence have I committed against you. O dear one, I am your servant and will serve you as a servant. The wife of a servant would be a maid-servant. Do you not hear such words?

Then Indra, with his mind overcome by infatuation, got up and again put that exquisitely beautiful woman on his lap.

Śacī said:

47b-51a. O female curlew, your life is good, (and) my life certainly fruitless. You are loved by the lord, and I, an excellent lady, am always disliked by him, till (your) religious merit (lasts). O female curlew, that religious merit will be exhausted. Being born in the family of curlew you will again suffer grief. Till then sport with the lord of gods as you please. O virtueless female curlew, after a few days (the lord) would not be yours.

Having heard her very amazing words, that Padmagandhā, giving up her antagonism, saluted that chaste lady (i.e. Śacī), and said to her:

Padmagandhā said:

51b-53a. O daughter of Puloman, O beautiful woman,

what you have said is wonderful. Tell me how I am a female curlew. I desire to listen to it carefully. Who am I? Where did I stay? How have I, a chaste woman, come here? After how much time will my religious merit be exhausted?

Śacī said:

53b-60a. O Padmagandhā, formerly you were born of a curlew. You lived on the earth, eating impure flesh and insects. On the charming bank of Gaṅgā there was a fig tree. After building a nest on it, you lived there. Once a black serpent entered the hole on the fig tree and bit you. And you, a wicked one, suddenly died. The serpent angrily ate up all your flesh. O beautiful woman, all your fleshless bones remained there only. O good one, once the tree was hurled down by a strong wind. O beautiful one, being broken it fell into the Gaṅgā along with its roots. When that fig tree fell into Gaṅgā, your bones were submerged, O best lady. As long as those bones will remain in Gaṅgā, you will always be loved by the lord.

60b-65a. O Padmagandhā, I have told you everything as to which of your religious merits has placed (even) Indra under your thumb. Blessed is goddess Jāhnavī (i.e. Gaṅgā) due to whose favour, you, a female curlew, not touched even by cāṇḍālas, lie on the lap of Indra.

The daughter of Puloman, the chaste lady, being insulted even by Indra, with her lotus-face faded, went as she had come. That excellent woman Padmagandhā remained on Indra's lap only. Those words of her remained, as it were, wakeful in her heart. O brāhmaṇa, once the lord of gods very much pleased with her virtues, himself said to her: "O beautiful lady, ask for a boon."

Padmagandhā said:

65b-67a. You are the chief of all gods and the lord of crores of women. Yet, O lord, you are under my influence. (Then) what is the use of other boons? Yet, O best god, you who desire to grant (me) a boon (should) take a pledge before me with your (bodily) acts, mind and words.

Indra said:

67b-69a. O you beautiful lady, order me what I shall give you—(my) life, wealth, kingdom, clothes (or attendants). (What I promise) is true, (certainly) true, is repeatedly true. There is no doubt about it. O you fawn-eyed one, I shall certainly give you what you desire.

Padmagandhā said:

69b-70a. O lord of the three worlds, if you are indeed pleased with me, then give me the boon that I shall be born in the stock of elephant.

Indra said:

70b-74a. O beautiful lady, I who have given a promise, give you the boon. But many griefs have come to my heart. O beautiful lady, I do not get happiness if I do not see you even for a moment. Then how can I put up with the unbearable separation from you for a long time? O you of stout breasts, O you beautiful lady, if you have compassion for me, then stay with me for a few days (more).

Then enjoying the large wealth of the lord of the gods that chaste woman lived for a myriad of years in the house of the lord.

Padmagandhā said:

74b-75a. O lord of gods, give me an order to fulfil my desire. I (shall) go to the land of religious rites (i.e. Bhāratavarṣa). I salute the pair of your feet.

Indra said:

75b-76a. O you having a moon-like face, after living with me, having the measure of an ocean of love for you, for a few days, you will go as you please.

76b-78a. Then, that Padmagandhā, day and night sporting with him in the pleasure-house, lived there for three myriads of years. Then, she, full of joy, said to the lord of gods: "Give me an order. I (shall) now go to the earth."

Indra said:

78b-79a. O you beautiful one, give up your apathy. Stay with me here only. I cannot abandon you; (you are) more important than (my own) life.

Padmagandhā said:

79b-82a. O lord of gods, when, on the exhaustion of my religious merit I shall go to the earth, then I shall have separation from you for a long time. On that separation, O lord, I, having gone to the earth, desire (to come back to) heaven. O Indra, having gone to the land of religious rites, I shall employ that means by which I shall never be separated from you.

Indra said:

82b-84. O good one, when you again desire to do this, then O beautiful one, you will again quickly come (here).

Then, with his body sprinkled by tears trickling from his eyes, he embraced her, and addressing her as "O dear one", said: "You (can) go". Then by his order the chaste woman came to the land of religious rites.

85-92a. O brāhmaṇa, she was born in the stock of female elephants and remembered her former birth. She who was well-born in the stock of female elephants and remembered her account went, after a few days, to the bank of Gaṅgā. Bathing in Gaṅgā, and decorated with the mud from Gaṅgā, and uttering (the words) 'Gaṅgā, Gaṅgā', she entered a deep pool of water. That female elephant, of the form of a mountain, remembering her own birth, went into that pool of the Gaṅgā water, and died. Seeing her boldness, all deities gladly showered her with excellent flowers like pārijāta etc. To bring her, of a dark body, Indra, of a good mind, and surrounded by all hosts of gods, speedily went (to Gaṅgā) due to a long separation from her. Telling her, of a divine body, his own agonies (while) in the Puṣpaka (aeroplane) he went to his own abode, after gladly abandoning, for her sake, Śacī, Rambhā and Pramlocā and Urvaśī, that had come (there).

92b-95a. That excellent lady, increasing the happiness in the mind of Śakra, that fortunate one, dear (to Indra), stayed in the city of Indra as long as her bones remained in Gaṅgā, O

Jaimini. A hundred crores (of the members of) her family lived in Indra's abode for that period. That divine beauty became the object of the friendship of those who were kings of kingdoms in heaven due to the power of their austerities.

95b-97a. O Jaimini, such a fruit is had due to a bath in Gaṅgā. The fruit of (i.e. got by) him who casts his body in Gaṅgā cannot be described. O Jaimini, as long as the dead body and the bones remain in Gaṅgā, till that time, i.e. for a hundred crores of kalpas she resided in the abode of the god.

97b-99a. O Jaimini, listen to the fruit obtained by a man whose dead body is tossed in Gaṅgā by her currents: He, lying on a golden bed, and fanned with the breezes of charming chowries by divine ladies, becomes happy.

99b-104. I shall tell you about the abode of him whose dead body is seen on the sandy bank of Gaṅgā heated by the rays of the sun: With his entire body smeared with divine fragrant substances and sandal he always sports with divine damsels in heaven. Listen to the fruit obtained by him whose body is seen torn by crows, vultures, herons, and (other) birds in (Gaṅgā) the mother of Bhīṣma: He, with his chest embraced by the stout, high, charming breasts of divine damsels, always sleeps on a bed in heaven. O brāhmaṇa, listen to the inexhaustible fruit from me who am telling it, which he who (i.e. whose body) is surrounded by ants, insects and flies and whose bones are seen to have fallen in Gaṅgā, obtains.

105-110. He, with the dust-particles on his feet removed by the ornaments on their crowns and being saluted with their heads by the hosts of gods, behaves in heaven like Indra for a long time. That man whose body falls into Gaṅgā even against his desire, is freed from all sins, and would become Viṣṇu. He whose charcoals (burnt parts of the body) are seen to be tossed by the water in Gaṅgā, would remain in heaven proportionately with the number of the charcoals for more than a hundred kalpas. Maybe all (kinds) of religious merit are exhausted. (But) when the body has fallen into Gaṅgā, the religious merit is never exhausted. What is the use of prolixity in this matter? The greatness of him who has cast his body in Gaṅgā is not (i.e. cannot be) known. That blessed man who, on the earth, sometime devoutly touches the water of Gaṅgā, destroying heaps of

very strong sins, crosses the fearful ocean of the (mundane) world and goes to the (other) shore in a boat of boundless pleasure.

CHAPTER NINE

The Greatness of Gaṅgā

Jaimini said:

1. O preceptor, tell me again the excellent greatness of Gaṅgā. Due to its sweetness I again desire to drink the nectar of the account of Gaṅgā.

Vyāsa said:

2-9a. That too I shall tell you since you are a devotee of Gaṅgā. Those feet of men (alone) are fruitful (i.e. meritorious) that go to the bank of Gaṅgā. Those (alone) are (fruitful) ears that hear the sound of the waves of Gaṅgā. That (alone) is the (fruitful) tongue which knows the various (kinds of) sweetness of her water. Those (alone) are the (fruitful) eyes that see the charming ripples of Gaṅgā. That is said to be the (fruitful) forehead which bears a vertical mark of the clay of Gaṅgā. Those (alone) are the (fruitful) hands that are intent on worshipping Gaṅgā. That (alone) is the (fruitful) body, giving the fruit of the four goals of human life, which has fallen into the pure water of Gaṅgā. O best brāhmaṇa. All the manes of the dead ancestors, living in heaven, (seeing their son) going to the bank of Gaṅgā, and seeing her water are delighted, and praise it, O Jaimini, saying: "Formerly we have done religious merit for obtaining a good position; and it will be inexhaustible, since we have such a son. He has now gratified us with the water of Gaṅgā. We shall go to the highest abode which is difficult to be had even by gods.

9b-15. Those substances which our son will offer to us and into Gaṅgā, will, all of them, be inexhaustible for us." So also the manes living in hell and full of all miseries, will, on seeing their son going to the bank of Jāhnavī (i.e. Gaṅgā) speak thus: "Even by the grace of (our) son, all sins that we committed and

that give the torments in hell, will perish. All of us are freed from all the torments in hell, extremely difficult to bear. Now due to the grace of our son we shall reach the highest position." The manes of that man who having undertaken a pilgrimage returns home through folly, are disappointed, and all of them go (back) as they had come. While on pilgrimage to Gaṅgā, one should avoid (eating) flesh, coitus, a swing, a horse, an elephant, so also (using) shoes, an umbrella. The trouble due to the fatigue of the journey is not regarded as painful.

16-20. At the time of bath in Gaṅgā one should not remember the pleasure from *padma* (= a mode of coitus) (that is had) in the house. One should avoid, while on the pilgrimage to Gaṅgā, false speech and contact with heretics. (One should also avoid) eating twice (a day), a quarrel, censuring others, greed, pride, anger and jealousy. While on the pilgrimage to Gaṅgā one should also avoid laughing too much, and grief. One should look upon oneself, sleeping on the ground, as sleeping on a bed. While going along the path, a man should utter the good names of Gaṅgā. The greatness of goddess Jāhnavī destroys all sins. Uttering (the name of Gaṅgā) giving happiness and liberation he goes along the path. "O Gaṅgā, O goddess, O mother of the world, present yourself to me."

21-27. With these gentle words he should remove his fatigue. "Oh, how I left my house; how I came here after (so much) exertion". He who would speak like this, does not have the complete fruit of it (i.e. the pilgrimage). Those men who, overcome by such sorrowful thoughts as: "Where is my bed? Where is my wife? Where is my friend? Where is my house? I am sleeping on the ground on this desolate road. How have I come here? What is the position of the things like wealth and grains in my house? After how many days shall I go back to my house?," go along the path, do not have the entire fruit of the bath in Gaṅgā, O brāhmaṇa. "O Gaṅgā, this pilgrimage is undertaken to reach your bank. O best river, due to your favour I shall succeed in it without any obstacle." Having uttered this hymn, especially at the time of the pilgrimage, he, with delight, should go from his house along with devotees of Viṣṇu, O Jaimini. He should not go with a great speed, nor very slowly.

28-30. The wise ones should not undertake any other work

during the pilgrimages to Gaṅgā. Half of the religious merit of him who carries on trade, business etc. on the bank of Gaṅgā or at Prayāga, perishes. "All my sins, small or great, committed in existence after existence will perish due to the favour of the goddess Gaṅgā." Saying so, a wise one, being very much delighted, should go to the bank of Gaṅgā.

31-35a. Seeing mother Gaṅgā, he should utter this hymn: "Today my existence is fruitful, today my life is well-lived, (since) with my eyes I am actually seeing you of the nature of Brahman, O goddess; just by seeing you the sin of me, a great sinner, produced during crores of existences, has perished." Speaking like this, he, full of devotion, should salute goddess Jāhnavī, by dropping his body (i.e. by prostrating himself) on the ground. Then, O best brāhmaṇa, he, with the palms of his hands joined, with devotion and being very much delighted, should again utter this hymn:

35b-41. "O Gaṅgā, O goddess, O mother of the world, I am touching your water with my feet. Being pleased, pardon this fault of mine. O auspicious one, your water is a staircase for going up to the heaven. Therefore, I am touching it with my feet. O Gaṅgā, O goddess. I repeatedly salute you." Then the wise one, devoutly carrying the Gaṅgā-water on his head, should, saying 'Gaṅgā', enter the stream (of Gaṅgā). "I smear my body with your mud, very soft and destroying all sins. O mother, remove my sin." With his body smeared with the mud of Gaṅgā, and uttering (the words) 'Gaṅgā, Gaṅgā', he should bathe in Gaṅgā, destroying all sins. Then again taking the clay to the accompaniment of the hymn mentioned before, and again taking the clay to the accompaniment of the hymn that will be told (now) he should devoutly bathe.

42-43. "O Gaṅgā, O you of the nature of Brahman, I am bathing in your pure water. Give me the fruit told (in the holy texts)." Then, O brāhmaṇa, the wise one, remembering Gaṅgā, Nārāyaṇa, should, as he wishes, bathe in Gaṅgā, the mother of the world.

44. Having thus bathed in Gaṅgā, he should clean his body with (a piece of) cloth. He should not drop the water from the clothes to be worn into Gaṅgā.

45-46. A wise man should not brush his teeth in Gaṅgā. If

he does so through folly, he would not obtain the religious merit due to the water of Gaṅgā. Having done that act of brushing the teeth etc. in the morning somewhere else, he should abandon the garment worn during the night, and then should bathe in Gaṅgā.

47-48. He who without going to an external land would bathe in Gaṅgā, would also not obtain the full fruit of the bath in Gaṅgā. Having bathed, the wise one should place sectarian marks of clay at various places (on his body). Then with a steady mind he should present libations of water to the manes etc.

49-50. The manes of him who offers them libations of the water of Gaṅgā, are gratified for a period of a hundred crores of years. The manes of him who offers śrāddha to them on Gaṅgā, live pleased in the abode of gods (i.e. heaven), O best brāhmaṇa.

51-52. Observing a fast, and having performed rites like a bath etc. in Gaṅgā, he should then do acts like giving gifts, worshipping deities, (shouting) 'victory (to Gaṅgā)', which being done in Gaṅgā do not perish. Fasting and finishing the rites like bathing in Gaṅgā, he should perform the five major sacrifices (viz. *brahma-*, *pitṛ-*, *deva-*, *bhūta-*, and *nṛ-yajña*) and should worship Gaṅgā.

53-58. A wise man should bathe the image of goddess Gaṅgā, so also of Śrī Viṣṇu with the divine water of a cocoanut. In the absence of the image of Gaṅgā, he should recollecting Jāhnavī (i.e. Gaṅgā) in his heart, put the cocoanut-water into the Gaṅgā-water. He should (then) devoutly worship (the images of) Gaṅgā and Viṣṇu with divine fragrant substances, bright lamps full of ghee, fragrant incense, many beautiful flowers, many very ripe fruits, excellent offerings of eatables, water for washing the feet, respectful offerings, water for rinsing the mouth with, tāmbūlas with khadira, so also with other special presents, with various eulogies, and with offerings of eatables. Then the wise one should devoutly go three times round the image of the goddess that is worshipped and (that of) Viṣṇu, the highest lord, keeping them to his right.

59-60. Then the wise one making a solemn vow through physical acts, mind and speech as "O sinless one, O daughter of Jahnu, remaining without food (today) I shall eat food the next

day (i.e. tomorrow); be my refuge", he being extremely delighted should keep awake at night after having controlled his sleep.

61-62. If the wise one is too weak to eat fruits only, then, O greatest brāhmaṇa, he should eat (very) little food, but should not have a (full) meal. O Jaimini, having worshipped (the images of) Gaṅgā and Viṣṇu in the morning, he should give presents to a brāhmaṇa according to his wealth.

63-65. "O best river, may all that—the worship, the keeping awake before you—be faultless through your favour." Speaking like this, saluting her (i.e. Gaṅgā) and having performed his daily rites, the brāhmaṇa himself should break his fast along with his relatives. O dear, listen to the fruit from me who am telling it, of the religious merit of him who thus observes the holy fast on the bank of Gaṅgā.

66-68. He is freed from sins committed during other (i.e. former) existences. He, having Viṣṇu's form and reaching Viṣṇu's city, rejoices (there) with Viṣṇu. Living in Viṣṇu's city for thousands of crores of kalpas and hundreds of crores of kalpas, he enjoys all prosperity, very difficult to be obtained. Then by Viṣṇu's order he goes to Brahmā's world. In Brahmā's world he enjoys prosperity which is very difficult to be had even by gods.

69-70. Living in Brahmā's world for that much period (i.e. thousands of crores of kalpas and hundreds of crores of kalpas), he, then, getting into a beautiful chariot, goes to Śiva from Brahmā's abode. There he enjoys pleasures of various kinds, which are extremely difficult to be had. He also gets the headship of Śiva's attendants. What is the use of speaking many other words?

71-78a. Then that meritorious man, after living in Śiva's abode for that much period (i.e. thousands of crores of kalpas and hundreds of crores of kalpas), would, as it were, another Indra, go to Indra's world. Then he would remain on the same seat with that virtuous (god). Having enjoyed there all his desired objects for a period of a hundred crores of kalpas, he would, like another Moon, go to the Sun's world from there. Having enjoyed nectar there, near the Moon, he would become a sovereign emperor after again having come to the earth. Having protected the earth for a long time and having conquered all his enemies,

he would, at the end of his life (-span), happily meet death in Gaṅgā. Again he, the very glorious one, himself getting into an aeroplane, goes to the city of the lord, difficult to be reached even by deities. Having enjoyed all pleasures there for four ages of Manus, he securing the highest knowledge, would obtain liberation, difficult to be secured. There is no doubt that even he who would meet death on the path when he is on his pilgrimage to Gaṅgā would go to the highest abode.

78b-84a. On the earth there was a religious and sweet-speaking king named Satyadharma during the junction of Tretā and Dvāpara yugas. The queen of that king was Vijayā by name. She was beautiful, of good character, and highly devoted to the service of her husband. Having enjoyed for seven thousand years this earth, he whose time of death had come sometime died along with his wife. Then the couple, causing fear, tied by Yama's soldiers went to Yama's abode along a painful path. Seeing them Dharmarāja also said to Citragupta: "O Citragupta, consider all acts of these two." O Jaimini, Citragupta, being (thus) ordered by him, considered their acts from the beginning, and with the palms of his hands joined, spoke:

Citragupta said:

84b-85. O king, listen. I am telling all the acts of these two. Listen, I am also telling the remedy against their ill-luck (due to) whatever good or bad act they did on the earth.

86-88. Once, O competent one, a deer frightened by tigers, came from the forest to save its life, to his assembly. Seeing it coming, he, being very curious, got up and quickly struck on its hip with his sword. The king struck the deer even though it had sought his shelter. Therefore, O lord, this king, along with his wife, should be punished by you.

89-96. There is no doubt that he, along with crores and crores of members of his family, would reside in hell for as many thousands of ages and hundreds of ages of Manu as the number of hair on his body. Listen to the religious merit of the wise one who with (i.e. at the cost of) even his life and wealth protects him who has sought his shelter. Freed from all sins, chief among them being a brāhmaṇa's murder, he would at the end (of the

span) of his life go to liberation difficult to be attained even by meditating saints.

Then by Yama's order, his messengers put the king with his wife in a very painful hell where the trees have leaves as sharp as swords. Since the leaves of the trees there resemble swords, the wise call it Asipatravana. Then living in that Asipatravipina (hell) for hundreds of crores of Yugas, he, along with his wife resorted to the hell called Vyāghrabhakṣya. (One) who enters that hell full of all troubles, would be a prey of tigers. Therefore, it is known as Vyāghrabhakṣya.

97-99a. The king, along with his wife, stayed there for thousands of crores of yugas, and at the end of his sins was born, after having gone to the earth, in the stock of frogs. The two, the male frog and the female frog, remembering their (former) births, were very much pained. Always eating insects, they lived on a bank (of a river). Once, finding (i.e. on) an auspicious day (some) men were going along the path to the bank of Jāhnavī. O brāhmaṇa, the two (frogs) saw them.

The frog said:

99b-102. Due to all those sinful acts I did due to my ignorance, even now pain does not abandon us. Casting their bodies into Gaṅgā, even the sinners would be freed. Yet, how can we experience such a kind of unhappiness? Now I desire to cast this body (of me) into Gaṅgā. O dear one, tell me, what is the remedy? I desire to cross the ocean of agony.

The female frog, having heard his words, spoke politely:

The female frog said:

103-105a. O lord, it is not possible to bear this agony. Do so quickly.

O brāhmaṇa, the couple, then, remembering Gaṅgā, giver of auspicious things, was delighted and at once undertook the pilgrimage in order to die. A poisonous, fearful deadly serpent saw them, hungry for a long time, going along the path.

The deadly serpent said:

105b-112. O sinful frogs, you, whose time of death has come, have arrived. Therefore, you should be eaten by me who am hungry.

Then the unhappy, very much frightened couple spoke with reverence to the deadly serpent, that was in front of them, these words: "In our heart, O serpent, there is not the slightest fear of death. Formerly, I was a king called Satyadharma on the earth. This was my queen named Vijayā. Through temptation I, a wicked one, resorted to her(?) Due to that act I experienced pain for a long time in the abode of Yama. To undergo the remaining (fruit of) my act I went to (i.e. was born in) the stock of frogs along with my wife. The act done by a sinner does not leave (him). O serpent, we truly desire to go to the highest abode. We are going to the bank of Gaṅgā to cast our bodies (into her). O serpent, give up your indiscrimination, causing torment in the hell. How much pleasure will you have by devouring us?

113-116. Viṣṇu dwells in our heart. (In the same way) Hari (i.e. Viṣṇu) dwells in your heart also. Therefore, what enmity do we have with you, O serpent? The wise should never harm a living being. If it is done, then it is the Destiny that brings it about. Giving harm to men (i.e. causing them to commit harm) the wicked Destiny itself would take away (their) life, sons, wives, riches and glory. What is the use of mutterings (of names of deities), austerities, (giving) gifts, or sacrifices to him in whose heart the two letters 'hiṁ-sā' (i.e. harm) always remain?

117-118. That man who harms a living being just harms Viṣṇu (also). The revered lord of Lakṣmī lives in the bodies of all living beings. Lord Viṣṇu, having created himself in many ways, plays like a child in the pleasure-house of the mundane existence.

119-122. The body of a sentient being is the abode of the highest soul. Viṣṇu himself is the highest soul. Therefore, one should avoid doing harm. By destroying another's life one's own pleasure is had. (But) one's pleasure would be momentary (while) another would lose his life. This is the wonderful behaviour of people on the earth: Killing another person with great effort they

bring about their own pleasure. An intelligent one never knows himself.

123-127a. He should think in his mind: 'I am Viṣṇu. He is (also) Viṣṇu.' He, who, in this worldly existence, is pained due to another man's agony and is happy on his happiness, should be known to be actually Viṣṇu himself. Fie upon the happiness of the men deceived by delusion, and the happiness which would be had by causing harm to another (being), O serpent! Men soon get the fruits of those pleasures and pains which are given by them to a living being on the earth. Therefore, O serpent, give up (doing) harm, and be happy. When you are pleased, we shall go to the other shore of the ocean of unhappiness."

The serpent said:

127b-133a. When there would not[1] (?) indeed be a major sin (involved) in killing others, then Oh, how (i.e. why) has the Creator created those that are the preys and those that eat them? You have told the truth that harm should not be done to others. But in the case of all preys harm is not involved. Viṣṇu is of a universal form. It is the truth. There is no doubt about it. He himself has created the union of the prey and the one who eats it. He himself creates himself and himself protects himself. He himself eats himself. Such is the creation of Viṣṇu. Am I able to kill you? The creator of the form of Death, Viṣṇu himself, has sent me for this mission. That god who created you, and who always protects you, and who is of the nature of Death today kills you making me the instrument.

Vyāsa said:

133b-141. Then the serpent ate up (the couple of frogs), which was uttering, through great hunger, (the words) 'Gaṅgā, Gaṅgā', on the path. These two persons at every step obtained the great fruit of horse-sacrifices in their pilgrimage to the bank of the Gaṅgā. Therefore, these two noble ones have (the credit of) many horse-sacrifices. None is like them, since (even) I have

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1. The word '*na*' (not) is redundant as it gives a sense not intended in the context.

performed (only) a hundred sacrifices. Indra, in his own authority depending upon another came (there) on foot with materials of worship in his hand and surrounded by gods. The beauties like Rambhā and Urvaśī, proud of their youth, said to one another: "This very handsome man of taste, the best among the meritorious, has come. With my service I shall bring him under my influence." Someone said to someone else: "I know all arts. Therefore, only I shall be the beloved of this king." Someone said to someone else: "Even your Indra is under my influence. Then what wonder is there that this king also will be under my influence?"

142-149. "This one is my husband. This one is my lord. This one is my master. This one is my protector." Thus all the women, appreciating good qualities, said with great delight. O brāhmaṇa, hearing these various (talks) of them, a virtuous, appreciative woman said: "This king has taken that charming one (viz. Vijayā) belonging to Sudāsa as his wife. O ladies, (then) what is the use of quarrelling?" Then, O brāhmaṇa, those beauties, adorned with all ornaments, gave up quarrelling, and came there delighted at heart. They then worshipped that king with his sin vanished, and along with wife with (i.e. by giving him) water for washing his feet etc. Indra then spoke (to him) thus. Indra put him, along with his wife, into the chariot (decorated) with flowers. Heaven was full of noise with the sounds of kettle-drums, tabors, melodious small drums, and large drums, so also with the sounds of bracelets and clappings, and the shouts of victory given by gods. He, fanned with the breezes produced from white chowries in the charming hands of the divine ladies, and seated in a chariot with his wife, went to heaven. Then the god Indra, fearing destruction, gave that king Satyadharma half of his seat.

150-152. Due to Viṣṇu's compassion, that king, sitting on the same seat with Indra, acted as Indra in heaven. Enjoying all pleasures for thousands of crores of yugas he got into a chariot by the lord's order, and went to Vaikuṇṭha. Having enjoyed all charming pleasures there for a Manu period, and having obtained the higest knowledge there, he, with his wife, obtained liberation.

153-159. O brāhmaṇa, I have told you the entire fruit of this kind of (i.e. got by) him who casts his body while going on a pilgrimage along the bank of Gaṅgā. Philosophers, great sages

like Nārada, have not declared any restriction as regards time on going to the bank of Gaṅgā. O best brāhmaṇa, whenever a man would bathe in Gaṅgā, he certainly obtains inexhaustible religious merit. It is certain that Gaṅgā destroys all sins. If a man repeatedly commits sins, Gaṅgā does not purify him. O people, if you desire beatitude, then, giving up wicked thoughts, bathe in Gaṅgā, the mother of the world. By means of which very difficult acts do men get that religious merit which they would have by means of a bath in Gaṅgā? It is possible (for a man) to count the number of sharp showers and dust particles on the earth. (But) O brāhmaṇa, he cannot narrate the merits of Gaṅgā.

160-161. Having considered all your holy texts I say: "A man gets liberation after bathing (just) once in the water of Gaṅgā. Even he who, thinking of the lord of gods, and of Gaṅgā, destroying the mass of the affliction of all the afflicted ones, and the fear of sins, bathes in the water of a well, is freed from the masses of all sins like the murder of a cow, and due to the favour of Gaṅgā, O brāhmaṇa, he would go to Viṣṇu's city, giving all pleasures."

CHAPTER TEN

The Efficacy of Campaka Flower

Jaimini said:

1. O preceptor, through your grace I have heard this (description of the) greatness of Gaṅgā. Now, I desire to listen to the fruit of Viṣṇu's worship.

Vyāsa said:

2-3. O dear, listen to the excellent fruit of the worship of the lord of Lakṣmī, hearing which all men obtain excellent knowledge. O brāhmaṇa, listen to the rules according to which the Eternal One should be worshipped in the twelve months like Māgha. I shall (now) tell them.

4-8. When the auspicious month of Māgha, the best of all months, comes, the best devotee of Viṣṇu should give up (eating) flesh and coitus. He should everyday bathe in the morning; he should also avoid (the use of) oils; he should avoid taking food twice (a day) and also the food of others in the month of Māgha. A man, wearing a white garment, should, with a firm mind, begin worshipping Viṣṇu in the morning after having performed the five major sacrifices (viz. *brahmayajña* etc.). With lukewarm, pure water he should give bath to (the image of) the immutable Viṣṇu. He should besmear the parts of the body (of the image) of Viṣṇu with loose (i.e. soft) sandal. He should worship these of the lord of the world, the chief of gods, the Disc-holder. He should dry the vessels that are washed.

9-11. Having bathed (the image of) the lord of the world with lukewarm water, he should carefully dry his body with a divine garment. O best brāhmaṇa, I (shall) tell about the fruit which he who bathes (the image of) Viṣṇu with lukewarm water in the month of Māgha, gets. Freed from all sins committed in former existences, he enjoys all pleasure in this world, and (to enjoy) the remaining pleasure he goes to Viṣṇu's abode.

12-14. Listen to the religious merit of (i.e. obtained by) him who, after having washed the vessels and having purified them with water, would worship the (image of) the lord of the world. Free from all diseases, he, enjoying all desired objects here (i.e. in this world), would finally dwell for thousands of yugas in Viṣṇu's abode. In the morning and in the entire evening a devotee of Viṣṇu should place a smokeless, burning fire in front of (the image of) the Disc-holder (i.e. Viṣṇu).

15-19. Listen to the fruit of, i.e. obtained by, that devotee of Viṣṇu, who would burn fire in the morning and in the evening before (the image of) Viṣṇu in the month of Māgha to keep off cold. He, along with his sons and grandsons, enjoys all desired objects in this world, and in the end goes to Viṣṇu's city, difficult to be reached even by deities. As is his soul (to him) so is Viṣṇu. There is no doubt about this. A man should keep away cold from (the imags of) Viṣṇu sleeping on the bed as he keeps away cold from himself. What does the best god, being pleased, not give to him who would bathe (the image of) Viṣṇu with milk during the month of Māgha? In the same way he

should remove the cold (of the image) of the Disc-holder with a divine garment.

20-26. I shall tell the fruit of (i.e. obtained by) him who would worship (the image of) Viṣṇu after bathing him (it) with cocoanut water and milk in the month of Māgha. He, having lifted up a crore of men of his family sinking due to their own acts in the ocean of hell, difficult to cross, goes to the position of the Disc-holder (i.e. Viṣṇu). O best brāhmaṇa, especially during the worship of Viṣṇu on the fifth day of the bright half in the month of Māgha, so also on the Ekādaśī day and the fifth day[1] (in the dark fortnight) rice boiled in milk along with a lamp should be offered to Mura's enemy, the god of gods along with (his spouse) Lakṣmī. O Jaimini, O devotee of Viṣṇu, I shall tell you about the fruit of (i.e. obtained by) him who, everyday in the month of Māgha, offers rice boiled in milk along with incense to the Disc-holder (i.e. Viṣṇu). (Please) listen. Having at the end (of his life) gone to Viṣṇu's city, he enjoys (there) charming pleasures for four periods of Manu due to the grace of the Disc-holder. Again having come to the earth he would be a sovereign emperor. (There) he enjoys pleasures for a very long time and when dead (i.e. after death) goes to Viṣṇu's abode.

27-29. O Jaimini, a devotee of Viṣṇu, who is unable to give (rice boiled in milk) to the enemy of Mura on the fifth day, the seventh day or the eleventh day, should offer him best food. O best brāhmaṇa, the bright half is especially superior to the dark half. On the days (mentioned above) of the bright half one should give food to Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is not difficult to be attained by him who would give rice boiled in milk along with cakes to Viṣṇu, the conqueror of demons, at least on one day in Māgha.

30-33. There is no doubt that whatever is offered by a man to please a brāhmaṇa in the month of Māgha, would be inexhaustible for him. O brāhmaṇa, there is no destruction of the (fruit of the) act, good or bad, done in the month of Māgha, even after hundreds of ages of Manu. He who would worship Viṣṇu with campaka flowers in the month of Māgha would, after being freed from all sins, go to the highest abode. He stays in

1. The reading should have been '*saptamyām*' in place of '*pañcamyām*', as it rightly occurs in line 27a below.

Viṣṇu's abode for as many thousand yugas as the number of campaka flowers offered to Viṣṇu by him.

34-37. That fruit which is (obtained) by giving gold equal (in weight) to Meru, is obtained by worshipping Viṣṇu with (only) one campaka flower. O best brāhmaṇa, a campaka flower is always dear to Viṣṇu. Especially in the month of Māgha it is pure and dear to Viṣṇu. He who has not worshipped Viṣṇu with divine campaka flowers, would be without gems, without gold etc. in every birth. I am specially telling you the fruit of (the offering of) a campaka flower. O best brāhmaṇa, listen to it, the excellent one, along with its history.

38-44. O brāhmaṇa, a king named Suvarṇa, knowing all holy texts, became powerful in the entire Āryāvarta[1] due to his vigour. O brāhmaṇa sage, he, mad with royal glory, knowledge and youth, was always engaged in sins. By the words of his heretic ministers, he, through his greed for money, punished the good (even) without their fault, O brāhmaṇa. He, without sacrifices and gifts (i.e. who did not perform sacrifices and give gifts), surrounded by music and musical instruments squandered all the wealth obtained unjustly. He, always deluded by sins, did not support his kinsmen, did not feed deities and brāhmaṇas, and did not gratify the suppliants. He, always attached to sins, never honoured a guest. That king, the abode of sins, everyday went (away) from a temple. Was anyone among the indiscriminate ones able to count, even for hundreds of years, the other sins which he had committed?

45-52. Once that wicked-hearted king, deluded by lust, went to a prostitute's house at night. Seeing the king coming, (the prostitute) named Ujjvalā, suddenly getting up from the bed saluted him. Having washed his pair of feet with water from a golden pitcher, she, embracing the king with her arms, seated him on the bed. That king, sprinkled with the streams of the nectar of her love, and being curious remained on that bed. Then that harlot who was quite young, herself gave, with a smile, campaka flowers to the king. A flower from the garland of

1. Āryāvarta: Abode of the noble or the excellent (Āryas). Name of the region extending from the eastern to the western sea, and bounded on the north and south by the Himālaya and the Vindhya respectively.

flowers dropped on the ground from the hand of the king, and pervaded the atmosphere with its fragrance. Seeing the flower that had fallen down, the king, through great confusion said (the words) '*Namo Nārāyaṇāya* (salutation to Nārāyaṇa)' preceded by the syllable '*Oṃ*'. All the sins of the king perished due to (his having uttered) the word 'Nārāyaṇa' and due to the offering of the campaka flower.

53-58. All the villagers also gathered there and killed him that night in the prostitute's invincible house. Yama, who was very angry, sent his servants to take the king, the greatest sinner (to his abode). The messengers ordered by him, with their eyes red due to anger and having nooses and mallets in their hands came there very speedily. Yama's messengers exerted to take him to their abode. Then Nārāyaṇa's (i.e. Viṣṇu's) servants holding conches, discs and maces, and mounted upon Garuḍa came to take the king (to Viṣṇu's abode). Seeing the king bound by a noose, the very powerful servants of Viṣṇu struck Yama's messengers with discs and maces. Putting him into a divine chariot, they blew excellent conches.

59-61. Then the king who had got in the chariot, who was adorned with tulasī (leaves and) flowers, who had put on yellow silken garments, who was adorned with golden ornaments, who was being praised by hosts of sages, masters of the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas, who was surrounded by Viṣṇu's messengers, came to Viṣṇu's world. Then, O best brāhmaṇa, Viṣṇu himself got up, embraced the king with his four long arms and said to him:

The lord said:

62-65. O king, O best among all meritorious souls, tell (me) about (your) welfare. Now let us know what still remains to be attained by you. I always look after him who would even once say: 'Salutation to Nārāyaṇa.' He is my brother; he is my father. I accomplish all the desired objects, like a father to his son, of the man who would sometime remember my name 'Nārāyaṇa'. O best king, you are my devotee. Therefore, disclose your desire. What wonderful object shall I give you now?

The king said:

66-73a. O ocean of pity, you have undoubtedly given (me)

everything. Even a sinner like me has reached your inaccessible place.

By these words of him Lakṣmī's lord was pleased, and he affectionately made him sit. Listen to it (i.e. that account). He, full of pity, himself adorned him with golden ornaments fashioned by Viśvakarman. Viṣṇu, the extremely tolerant one, gratified the king with various kinds of eatables, very difficult to be had even by the divine ones. In this way the king lived in Viṣṇu's abode everyday for thousands of Manu's ages and nine hundred years. The righteous king protected his subjects. With great devotion he always worshipped Viṣṇu with charming campaka flowers and various kinds of offerings of eatables. When the span of his life was over the king died in the water of Gaṅgā and obtained liberation by the grace of Viṣṇu.

Vyāsa said:

73b-78. O brāhmaṇa, I have told you this efficacy of campaka flowers. Sinful persons have been liberated after worshipping Viṣṇu with campaka flowers. O brāhmaṇa sage, revered Viṣṇu, worshipped with a full-blown campaka flower gives the highest position in a short time. Those who worship the highest soul intentionally or even without an intention are freed from all sins, and they also go to the highest position. When Viṣṇu is pleased, nobody is a sinner, since that king, even though he had committed a sin, crossed this deep worldly ocean through Viṣṇu's favour and attained liberation. That man who, abandoning sin, would, with devotion and great respect, worship Nārāyaṇa (i.e. Viṣṇu), having large eyes like lotus-petals, with divine, fragrant campaka flowers would go (to Viṣṇu).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Rules of Viṣṇu Worship

Vyāsa said:

1-8. O Jaimini, O brāhmaṇa sage, I (shall) tell you the mode in which Viṣṇu should always be worshipped. Listen to it attentively. A wise man, having got up from his bed in the morning and taking a pot (full) of water, and covering his head with (a piece of) cloth, should go to a place outside (the town). There, the wise man, keeping mum, putting the sacred thread on his ear, should sit in the northern direction and urinate and excrete. He should not urinate or excrete in a temple of a deity, on the way, in cowpens, places where four roads meet, on the main road, in a ploughed soil, at the root of darbhas, in a courtyard, on the sandy bank of a river, at the root of a fig tree standing on a sacred spot, so also in a forest, in lakes and wells. A wise man should urinate and excrete till he does not see the sun, the moon, brāhmaṇas and the ten quarters. To cleanse himself he should not take the clay from inside the holes dug by mice etc. or (from) ploughed soil. A wise man should purify himself with water after bringing it from (a place of) water. A wise man does not purify himself by keeping his foot in water.

9-10. A wise man should answer the nature's call at night by facing the south. Covering his head with (a piece of) cloth he should answer the nature's call. A wise man should apply one (layer of) clay to his organ of generation, three (layers) to his anus, seven to his left hand, and ten to both the hands.

11-21. The wise should apply six (layers of) clay to both the feet. A wise man should brush his teeth after having (thus) purified himself. The cleansing of the teeth along with that of the lips etc. should be done. He should not brush his teeth by facing the south or the west. If he would do so, he would be a resident of hell. O brāhmaṇa, he should brush his teeth with the middle finger or the ring-finger or the thumb but never with the forefinger. A wise man should not brush his teeth with a twig of aśvattha or fig tree or of dhātrī tree; so also with that of devadāru or asura tree (for by doing so) the entire fruit of his daily rites perishes. O Jaimini, the manes of him, so also gods and

divine sages, being disappointed with him who brushes his teeth at the time of his bath go (away). The deities do not accept the worship of (i.e. offered by) him, and the manes do not accept the (libations of) water of (i.e. offered by) him who brushes his teeth in the noon or the afternoon. He who brushes his teeth at the time of his bath in a lake, should be known to be a cāṇḍāla till he sees Gaṅgā. The manes of him who brushes his teeth after the revered sun has risen, eat that stick with which he brushes his teeth and being grieved, go (away). A man brushing his teeth on a fast day or a śrāddha day does not get the fruit of it (i.e. of the fast or the śrāddha), O brāhmaṇa. O best brāhmaṇa, he should clean his teeth in the morning and his tongue with (a piece of) cloth. He should have twelve rinsings with water.

22-24. O Jaimini, the man who brushes his teeth in this manner on a fast day or the day of (offering of) śrāddha to the manes, gets the entire fruit. Doing the purification in this manner, the wise one should go into his house and abandon the night-garment. Then the wise, pure one, seated at the door of the chamber of the deity should remember the infinite god, the highest lord, Viṣṇu.

25-30. 'O Rāma, O you of a dark body, O Viṣṇu, O Nārāyaṇa, O you full of pity, O Janārdana, O you abode of the world, O Keśava, remove my sin. O you wearing a yellow garment, O infinite one, O Padmanābha, O you full of the world, O Vāmana, O god, O lord, be the refuge of him who has sought your shelter. O Dāmodara, O greatest of the Yadus, O Śrī Kṛṣṇa, O ocean of pity, O lotus-eyed one, O lord of gods, O Vāsudeva, favour me. O Garuḍa-bannered one, O Govinda, O supporter of all, O holder of the mace, O you having the conch in your hand, O you having the disc in your hand, O you having a lotus in your hand, remove (my) calamities. O you pleasure of Lakṣmī, O Viṣṇu, O Hṛṣīkeśa, O best of gods, O Puruṣottama, O enemy of Kaṁsa, O enemy of Kaiṭabha, remove (my) fear. O Śrīpati (i.e. lord of Lakṣmī), O Śrīdhara, O lord, O Śrīda, O Śrīkara, O Mādhava, O highest Brahman, O highest abode, O immutable one, be my refuge.'

31. O best brāhmaṇa, having thus remembered Viṣṇu, the wise man with the palms of his hands joined, having gone into the house, speaks like this:

32-35. 'O god, O Śrīpati, O Kṛṣṇa, O son of Devakī, O lord, O master of the world, abandon your sleep. It is the morning time.' Then the wise man should think in his mind that Devakī's son along with Lakṣmī is seated on the bed after having given up sleep. Then the devotee of Viṣṇu should give to Kṛṣṇa, a divine, covered pot full of water for washing his face. The intelligent ones serve the highest lord as servants serve their master for their livelihood.

36. O brāhmaṇa sage, the desired object of him who serves the lord of the world as his servant, is soon accomplished.

37-39. As the servants serve their master through fear, so the wise ones always serve Viṣṇu, the lord. O brāhmaṇa, he who, being fearless, serves him with this desire of him, is just a bad servant. He would not be (a devotee). Therefore, O best brāhmaṇa, a man desiring final beatitude, should always render service to the lord of Lakṣmī.

40-44. In the morning a devotee of Viṣṇu should take off from the body of Viṣṇu (i.e. his image) the used flowers, the garment worn during the night, and stale sandal also. Then the wise man should himself sweep the temple. He should slowly clean it with a groom. That man would live in Viṣṇu's house for as many hundred periods of Manu as the number of particles of dust that go out of the temple. Even a murderer of a brāhmaṇa, who sweeps the temple of Viṣṇu, goes to the highest position. What is the use of saying much? He should smear the temple with wool and cowdung. In that temple a wise man should recollect Viṣṇu.

45-51. O Jaimini, I shall tell you in brief about the religious merit of him who smears Viṣṇu's temple. Listen to it. He would happily live in Viṣṇu's house for as many thousands of kalpas as the dust particles that perish (i.e. are removed). One who sweeps and smears Viṣṇu's temple obtains the highest abode. Then what to say about him who knows how to worship the lord? When due to a calamity due to Indra he is not able to do it himself, then he should appoint his wife in Viṣṇu's temple. Or he should appoint his devoted son of good character, or his brother or sister in the god's temple. He should himself very carefully wash the things (needed) for Viṣṇu's worship with pure water seven times or three times. There is no doubt that copper vessels are

purified with acid, the vessels of bell-metal are purified with ash, and iron-vessels with fire.

52. Viṣṇu is not pleased with a rich man who bathes Viṣṇu, the lord of the world, with water in an iron pot.

53. If (he does so) through ignorance, he is purified by means of a bath in Gaṅgā. O best brāhmaṇa, in prosperity (i.e. when one is wealthy) one should always follow a rule.

54-62a. It is laid down in the holy texts that there is no rule in adversity. O best brāhmaṇa, when a conch which is carefully washed, touches the ground, it becomes pure after washing it a hundred times. Having in this way carefully washed the materials for worship, he should take materials for his bath and should go to a lake. If he comes home without taking a bath, the hosts of his manes do not accept the libations offered by him on that day. That man who foolishly puts in an obstacle for him who goes for bathing or for taking a meal, would be a resident of hell. There is no doubt that the manes of him who, having gone to a lake for a bath, would urinate or excrete (there) would eat urine and feces. Then having bathed and offered libations according to the rules, a wise man, remembering Viṣṇu, should come home. Then, O brāhmaṇa, the best brāhmaṇa after having washed both his feet in the courtyard should enter the temple of the deity. The religious merit earned during a year, of him who would enter the temple without washing his feet, perishes that moment only.

62b-67. Therefore, a wise man, having come after having bathed, should wash his feet in the courtyard and then enter the temple of the deity. Having sat down, the wise man should wash the pair of his feet with his left hand. Then he should carefully wash both his hands, O brāhmaṇa. O best brānmaṇa, Lakṣmī certainly abandons the fool who washes one of his feet with another or with his right hand. Then the intelligent one, having sat down, and with full concentration should commence the worship of Viṣṇu, giving all desired objects. After sitting upon a pure seat of deer-hide or tiger-hide, or merely on a cloth-seat, or also on the seat of darbhas or of flowers, he should worship Lakṣmī's lord.

68-79. A learned brāhmaṇa should never worship Viṣṇu (after sitting) on a wooden seat. 'O Earth, you are held by Viṣṇu,

you sustain all people. Therefore, O you who bear everything, give me an excellent seat to stay.' Speaking like this the worshipper of Viṣṇu should sit on the seat after spreading it out. He should never worship Viṣṇu by facing the South. Having poured water very fragrant and purified with a hymn into a conch, he should bathe the master, Lakṣmī's lord, along with Lakṣmī. O best brāhmaṇa, Jaimini, I shall tell you the fruit of (i.e. obtained by) him who bathes (the image of) the revered Janārdana with (water from) a conch. Listen. Being free from the sins of the murder of a brāhmaṇa, a cow, a woman, or of causing abortion or drinking liquor, he goes to Vaikuṇṭha, and (there) enjoys all pleasures. O brāhmaṇa, if a man on seeing (the image of) Viṣṇu, would worship (it) him, he quickly obtains whatever (he desires) through the grace of Lakṣmī's lord. O best brāhmaṇa, a wise man should, in the absence of a conch, put the fragrant water and tulasī (leaves) in a pot, and should bathe (the image of) Viṣṇu. Then having bathed (the image of the) god and having put (it) him on an excellent seat, he should smear his entire body with fragrant sandal. The man who treats the body of the Disc-holder with the mire of tulasī wood (tulasī-plant), has Viṣṇu always pleased with him. 'O lord of the world, this garland of tulasī leaves, giving pleasure by means of its fragrance is offered to you. Always be very well pleased.' O best brāhmaṇa, what does the great Viṣṇu, adorned with the garland of tulasī leaves to the accompaniment of this hymn, and pleased, not give? Then he should make the solemn observance with the hymns from the Veda.

80-89. The wise ones should then fix the directions with hymns from the Purāṇas: 'May Kṛṣṇa protect in the east. May Devakī's son protect in the south-east. May the enemy of demons protect in the south. May Madhusūdana protect in the south-west. May the Śrīmat (i.e. having Lakṣmī) protect in the intermediate directions. May Śrīdhara protect upwards. May the universal soul, of the form of the tortoise and full of pity protect from below. May all those who cause obstacles at the time of (Viṣṇu's) worship, go away, being struck by the missile of Viṣṇu's name.' Having thus fixed the directions he, bowing and with his palms joined, makes a solemn vow by means of the hymn to be told (hereafter): 'O god of gods, O Janārdana, make this wor-

ship commenced by me free from obstacles and successful. Be pleased, O highest god.' Having made a solemn vow (like this) a devotee of Viṣṇu, knowing everything, should assign the various parts of his body to different deities, and should meditate, with his heart on god Viṣṇu, resembling a fresh cloud, having eyes like lotuses, wearing a yellow garment, having a very charming, smiling face, adorned with the garlands of kadamba flowers, having very large arms, having ear-rings with the row of peacock's feathers on his head, deluding the ten directions with the sweet sound of his flute, surrounded by cowherdesses, and living in the charming Vṛndāvana. Having thus meditated upon the lord of gods, Viṣṇu, giving all desired objects, the devotee of Viṣṇu should then devoutly invoke him.

90-92a. The wise one should then offer water for washing his feet, materials of worship and water for sipping to Kṛṣṇa who is invoked and who grants the four goals of human life. The wise one should worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Devakī's son and the lord of all gods, with tender tulasī leaves or charming flowers.

92b-101. 'Salutations to Matsya (incarnation), to Kūrma incarnation. Repeated salutations to Varāha (incarnation). Salutation to you, Hari; repeated salutations to Vāmana. Salutation to the powerful Rāma, Rāma, Rāma. Repeated salutations to pure Buddha (the enlightened one), having pity. Salutation to you, Kalki; salutation to you of many forms. Salutation to you, Nārāyaṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, the holder of the Śārṅga bow, to Dāmodara, to the lord, to the god of gods. Salutation to Hṛṣīkeśa, to Śānta (the tranquil one), to Vyomapāda (whose feet are extended in the heaven). Salutation to the lord of Lakṣmī. Salutation to (you) having lotus-like eyes. Salutation to you Ananta, to you having mace in your hand, to you, Garuḍa-bannered (one), to you having the disc in your hand. Repeated salutations to you having the lotus in your hand, to Acyuta. Salutation to you, the enemy of demons and giving all desired objects. I always salute Mādhava, Sureśa (lord of gods), Viṣṇu, the highest soul, the one having a crown and ear-rings. Salutation to you, the revered one.' The wise one (should invoke Viṣṇu's) vehicle called Garuḍa with the hymn: 'Salutation to Garuḍa. Salutation to (his) conch, to (his) disc. Repeated salutations to (his) mace. Repeated salutations to (his) lotus, to his sword Nandaka.'

102-104. Having thus worshipped the lord of gods along with his consort and vehicle and weapons, the wise one should repeat the eight-syllabled formula. The wise one having then devoutly repeated the eight-syllabled formula, should offer Viṣṇu many excellent eatables. The devotee of Viṣṇu should also offer god Viṣṇu incense, lamp, tāmbūla and other presents.

105. The desired object of him who would offer Viṣṇu excellent incense made fragrant with sandal and agaru, is accomplished quickly, O best brāhmaṇa.

106. O brāhmaṇa, he who offers Viṣṇu incense made fragrant with ghee, would, after being free from crores of sins, go to Viṣṇu's abode.

107. He who would offer Viṣṇu incense made fragrant with resin, goes to the highest abode, inaccessible even to gods.

108. Viṣṇu in a moment removes all the sins of him who offers him a lamp with ghee or sesamum oil.

109. O best brāhmaṇa, O Jaimini, he who would give a tāmbūla made fragrant with camphor to Viṣṇu, gets liberation.

110. He who gives a tāmbūla with khadira, ultimately goes to Viṣṇu's place after having enjoyed all pleasure here (i.e. in this world).

111. A man, after offering a tāmbūla with ṣaṣṭimadhurikā (?) and nutmeg to Viṣṇu, would obtain heaven.

112-113. O Jaimini, the devotee of Viṣṇu, should go round him (i.e. his image) after keeping water in a conch, to the accompaniment of the hymn which will be told (now). 'O Janārdana, friend of the world, O you protector of those who seek your refuge, O lord, give me the status of the servant of the servant of your servant.'

114-119. O Jaimini, I shall tell you in brief the fruit of the religious merit of him who would go round (the image of) Viṣṇu with (i.e. repeating) this hymn. At every step of the going round (the image of) Viṣṇu sins like the murder of a brāhmaṇa, and (other) major sins perish. For as many thousands of kalpas a man rejoices with Viṣṇu as the steps he would devoutly walk while going round Viṣṇu. When a man slowly walks step by step while going round Viṣṇu, he obtains the fruit of a horse-sacrifice at every step. A crore-fold greater fruit would be obtained by going round (the image of) Viṣṇu than the fruit (obtained by) go-

ing round all (other images) in the worldly existence. Even he who goes round himself in front of (the image of) Viṣṇu, gets the same fruit. What is the use of many other words?

120-123. An intelligent man, while going round (the Liṅga of) Śiva, should not cross the receptacle for receiving the water with which the Liṅga has been bathed. By crossing it (i.e. if a man crosses it) his worship (of Śiva) would be fruitless. O best brāhmaṇa, he who would even once go round Viṣṇu, would certainly become a sovereign emperor in every birth. O brāhmaṇa, he who would go round Viṣṇu twice, obtains Indra's position within three days. There is no doubt about this. The man who would go round (the image of) Viṣṇu twice, would enter, after being freed from all sins, Viṣṇu's body.

124-125. O Jaimini, he who after entering a temple, would wave a conch over (the image of) Viṣṇu, would be honoured by gods. The sin in the body of him who would salute (the image of) Viṣṇu (by prostrating himself) like a staff on the ground, is reduced to ash that moment only.

126. Lakṣmī's lord Viṣṇu gives him who would salute Janārdana with his palms joined and placed on his head, the highest position.

127-129a. O brāhmaṇa sage, listen to the efficacy which I am telling, of the religious merit of those men who drop their entire body (i.e. prostrate themselves) on the ground and salute Viṣṇu. For as many thousands of kalpas as the dust particles with which their bodies are decorated, these men stay with Viṣṇu. Then the flowers taken off from (the image of) Viṣṇu are offered to the devotees of Viṣṇu.

129b-131. I shall tell you about these devotees of Viṣṇu. O best one, O Jaimini, listen. 'May Śuka, Sūta, so also Vyāsa, Nārada, sage Kapila, Prahlāda, Ambarīṣa, so also Akrūra and Uddhava, Bibhīṣaṇa, Hanūmān, and other devotees of Viṣṇu also accept the flowers taken off from (the image of) Viṣṇu, giving all desired objects.'

132-133. Saying so the devotee should drop on the ground the flowers taken off from (the image of) Viṣṇu. Then he himself devoutly accepts the flowers taken off from (the image of) Viṣṇu. O best brāhmaṇa, he on whose head are seen the excellent flow-

ers taken off from (the image of) Viṣṇu, should be known to be actually Viṣṇu himself.

134-138. All deities take the offerings of eatables to Viṣṇu, and flowers taken off from (the image of) him, which are difficult to be had, and which destroy sins. Then what need one say about human beings? O Jaimini, all the sins remaining in the body of the devotee of Viṣṇu, who smells a tulasī leaf, perish. The diseases in the body of him, into whose nose the fragrance of a tulasī leaf enters, instantly perish. O best brāhmaṇa, joy always exists in the house of him who rejoices after smelling the fragrance of a tulasī leaf. A wise man, with his palms joined, having praised the lord of the world with eulogies, should recite this hymn:

139-140. 'O Nārāyaṇa, O you of the form of the world, O you lord of the world, go home. O god, go to your place. Always be pleased. O lord of the world, O you full of the world, may the worship which I offered according to my capacity be faultless through your grace.'

141. Then the wise one should devoutly take the water (flowing) from the feet of Viṣṇu, the highest soul, and destroying all sins.

142. He who carries (on his body) even a drop of water (flowing) from Viṣṇu's feet, has bathed at all holy places. I have told you the truth.

143. He should touch the water (flowing) from the feet of Viṣṇu. It would give him the fruit of a bath in Gaṅgā, since the water of Gaṅgā is the water (flowing) from the feet of Viṣṇu.

144. For him who would touch the water (flowing) from Viṣṇu's feet there is no untimely death nor any fear from a disease.

145-147. May even sinful men drink everyday the medicine of the water (flowing) from the feet of Viṣṇu for the destruction of their sins and diseases. O brāhmaṇa, the sin in the body of that man who would drink the water (flowing) from Viṣṇu's feet perishes just in a moment. As by a medicine (the disease) in a human body is very much destroyed, in exactly the same way all the sin is destroyed by the water (flowing) from Viṣṇu's feet.

148-149. O brāhmaṇa, I shall tell you about the religious merit of (i.e. obtained by) him who would carry on his head the

pure water (flowing) from Viṣṇu's feet along with a tulasī leaf. He, freed from all sins like the murder of a brāhmaṇa, and assuming Viṣṇu's form, ultimately goes to Viṣṇu's city and rejoices with him.

150. A greater fruit would be obtained by touching the water (flowing) from Viṣṇu's feet than by giving gold equal to the measure of Meru (mountain).

151-154. A man who touches the water (flowing) from Viṣṇu's feet obtains that fruit which men get by giving a crore of horses, or which one would get by giving the earth with the seven islands to brāhmaṇas. A greater fruit would be obtained by touching the water (flowing) from the feet of Viṣṇu than the one that would be (obtained) by performing thousands of horse-sacrifices. A man would get a bigger fruit by touching the water (flowing) from the feet of Viṣṇu than the religious merit declared (to be got) by giving a hundred wells. What is the use of speaking much in this matter? I shall tell it in brief.

155-160a. A man becomes free due to the touch of the water (flowing) from Viṣṇu's feet. O best brāhmaṇa, I am repeatedly telling (this) firmly. He who touches the water (flowing) from Viṣṇu's feet, does not get rebirth. He who would devoutly eat the remnants of the eatables offered to Viṣṇu, which destroy all the sins, would go to the highest position. The body of him who, O best brāhmaṇa, eats the eatables offered to Viṣṇu, which are difficult to be had, abandons the sins even like the murder of a brāhmaṇa. The land of liberation, difficult to be obtained even by deities like the greatest god, would be obedient to him like a maid, who eats the articles of food offered to Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu soon takes him to his own body, who worships Viṣṇu without abandoning any of the eatables offered to Viṣṇu.

160b-169. How can I tell you the efficacy of the eatables offered to great Viṣṇu, on the enjoyer of which even Viṣṇu is dependent, O lord of brāhmaṇas? O brāhmaṇa, he who would devoutly offer excellent worship to Śrī Viṣṇu in this manner, even without the proper religious ceremony, every month, also would be dear to Viṣṇu, and would obtain the same fruit which he who knows the religious ceremony would get after performing the worship of Viṣṇu with the proper religious ceremony. O brāhmaṇa, O lord, if there is no devotion, then the lord would not be

pleased even if he is worshipped with many offerings of eatables. There is no doubt that one gets as much fruit as is his devotion to the god. That worship of Viṣṇu which men perform without devotion would be a worship at a wrong time, O best brāhmaṇa. Knowledge is the root of devotion. Devotion is the root of Viṣṇu. For the coming up of the liberation due to worship, the root is the propitiation of Viṣṇu. All that, even very little which a man does with faith, would be inexhaustible, O wise one; (for) every act is accompanied by faith. O brāhmaṇa, he who devoutly worships Viṣṇu even (with) little water, obtains the position of Viṣṇu, since Viṣṇu is dependent on his devotees.

170. O brāhmaṇa, this entire world is worthless. Worship of Viṣṇu is the only truth. Therefore, a man desiring his good should worship Kṛṣṇa of infinite forms.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Greatness of the Holy Fig Tree

Vyāsa said:

1-2. O best brāhmaṇa, a devotee of Viṣṇu should everyday in (the month of) Phālguna devoutly worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa saluted by gods. Listen properly to the fruit which I shall tell, of (i.e. obtained by) him who would bathe Devakī's son with clarified butter in Phālguna.

3-6. He, having received the fruit of all sacrifices and of all gifts, and freed from all sins goes in the end to Viṣṇu's place. Having enjoyed pleasures in Viṣṇu's abode for thousands of crores of yugas, he, having obtained excellent knowledge, obtains liberation there only. He who offers, in winter, sweet-meat made of sesamum-seeds to Kṛṣṇa, of the form of a cowherd, would go to Viṣṇu's abode. He who would offer sweet balls made with ghee to Viṣṇu, the highest soul, would drink nectar in heaven for a period of hundreds of Manu's ages.

7-9. Viṣṇu, with his mind pleased, cuts off the bond of the mundane existence of him who offers pleasing candied sugar to

Viṣṇu, O Jaimini. O brāhmaṇa, a man should offer a beautiful fruit to the god. In the end he goes to Indra's city and would be honoured by gods. What does he who, the devoted one, would offer pure sugar to Kṛṣṇa, not obtain through Vāsudeva's grace, O brāhmaṇa?

10-12. Listen to the fruit of (i.e. obtained by) him who offers a very ripe, sweet, badari-fruit to Kṛṣṇa in the month of Phālguna? Along with his sons and grandsons he enjoys all pleasures here (i.e. in this world), and getting into a beautiful chariot, goes to Viṣṇu's abode in the end. A man should not give a badari-fruit with jaggery to Viṣṇu. O best brāhmaṇa, if, through ignorance, he would give it, he would be a resident of hell.

13-16. O brāhmaṇa, listen from me who am telling it, to the fruit of (i.e. obtained by) him who offers a very ripe pomegranate to Viṣṇu in the month of Phālguna. The lucky one stays for as many ages of Manu as there are seeds in the pomegranate in Viṣṇu's abode. O best brāhmaṇa, he who offers a mixture of flour and molasses ground and boiled together to Viṣṇu in the month of Phālguna, should be known to be the performer of a thousand horse-sacrifices. O best brāhmaṇa, the man who would bathe (the image of) Viṣṇu with honey in the month of Caitra, obtains the highest position of Viṣṇu.

17-18. The Sun's son (i.e. Yama) never makes an inquiry of him who would bathe (the image of) Nārāyaṇa, Anāmaya with honey (in the month of Caitra). The name of him who would bathe (the image of) Lakṣmī's lord with a kiṁśuka flower, is not written by Citragupta in his record.

19-21. When in Caitra Kṛṣṇa, the lord of the worlds, is worshipped with tilaka flowers by a man, then he is not reborn on the earth. A man worshipping Kṛṣṇa, the crest-jewel of all gods, with a black aśoka flower, never meets with a calamity. He who with a pleased mind, worships in the spring, the lord with fragrant vernal (flowers), is honoured even by gods.

22. The lord, seated on the altar, himself gets up and honours him who would worship Viṣṇu with divine, unbroken sprouts.

23-24. A man who would worship Viṣṇu with fresh, tender dhātrī leaves, soon obtains his desired object. He who would

worship lord Viṣṇu with bilva leaves, with flower of white thorn-apple and flowers of sun-plant, crosses the ocean of the worldly existence.

25. O brāhmaṇa, all gods like Indra day and night honour him who would offer an excellent plantain fruit to Viṣṇu.

26. O brāhmaṇa, he who would devoutly offer wheat-flour to Viṣṇu of the form of a cowherd, is freed from all sins.

27-32. When the sacred month of Vaiśākha, dear to Viṣṇu, arrives, a devotee of Viṣṇu should abandon flesh, coitus and oil. In the month of Vaiśākha a devotee of Viṣṇu should bathe in the morning, should avoid the food of others, and should not eat twice (a day). In the morning, O brāhmaṇa, he should worship Viṣṇu according to the mode mentioned already. In (the month of) Vaiśākha he should bathe (the image of) Viṣṇu with water made fragrant with flowers. Till twilight he should bathe (the image of Viṣṇu) in cold water. Thrice a day (i.e. at dawn, in the noon and at sunset) he should devoutly worship the lord with various offerings of eatables. O brāhmaṇa sage, what would the lord of Lakṣmī, the highest god, decorated with the garlands of damana in Vaiśākha, and (therefore) pleased, not give (to the devotee)? Which wise man is able to measure the religious merit of him who would offer barley-food to the Disc-holder (i.e. Viṣṇu) in the month of Vaiśākha?

33-34. All that is offered to Viṣṇu only in the month of Vaiśākha to please him, would be inexhaustible. O brāhmaṇa, any other good act done in the month of Vaiśākha to please Viṣṇu, does not perish.

35-38. A man who puts up a place where water is distributed to travellers in the month of Vaiśākha to please Viṣṇu, everyday gets the fruit of a horse-sacrifice. Vaiśākha is a month difficult to be had. It gives the fruits of all acts. Abandoning even hundreds of other acts Viṣṇu should be worshipped during that month. He who worships Viṣṇu even for a day in Vaiśākha, obtains that fruit which is obtained by having worshipped Viṣṇu for six years. A man should worship Viṣṇu of the form of the holy fig tree everyday in Vaiśākha for securing the four goals of human life.

39-42. He who would worship the holy fig tree with a handful of water, would, after being free from crores of sins, go to the

highest place. What would the lord in the form of the holy fig tree not give to him who binds the roots (i.e. puts up a platform around the roots) of the holy fig tree with stones etc., O brāhmaṇa sage? He also, who, on seeing the holy fig tree, salutes it, goes to the highest place. (The span of) his life increases. There is no doubt about this. O Jaimini, there is no want or excess in the rite which, O brāhmaṇa, a man performs at the root of the holy fig tree.

43-55. O Jaimini, all holy places like the Three-streamed (Gaṅgā) are present there where even one holy fig tree, the best among the trees, stands. O brāhmaṇa, he who would worship the holy fig tree, worships Viṣṇu, since the lord himself is of the form of the holy fig tree. There is no act in the world doing which he who, a fool, through disrespect, hurts the holy fig tree, is purified, O best brāhmaṇa. This holy fig tree, the lord of trees, is glorified to be Viṣṇu's form. Therefore, there is no savior of those who hurt a holy fig tree. O brāhmaṇa, Viṣṇu would remove the sin remaining in the body of him who seeing a holy fig tree, afterwards touches it and salutes it. Yama himself extracts with fish-hooks the eyes of him who sees him who harms a holy fig tree, and though capable, would not ward him off. Yama himself cuts off with a knife the tongue of him who, a fool, would not say: 'Do not cut off the holy fig tree.' That man who hurts even one small branch of a holy fig tree, obtains the fruit of a crore of murders of brāhmaṇas. That fierce sin which is involved in the murder of a brāhmaṇa, in violating the wife of one's preceptor, in drinking liquor, so also in snatching others' deposits, that sin which is involved in causing an abortion, in killing a cow, in the murder of a woman, in adultery, in killing him who has sought one's refuge, so also in killing one's friend, in not speaking in confidence, in killing one's husband, in censuring others, in eating on a day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, is committed by men by cutting off a holy fig tree. No sinner, comparable to him who hurts a holy fig tree, Viṣṇu's form, is heard on the earth.

56. I am telling the importance of the holy fig tree along with its history. O best brāhmaṇa, O dear, listen to it attentively.

57-63. O brāhmaṇa, formerly in Tretāyuga there was a brāhmaṇa devoted to Viṣṇu and engaged in the welfare of all

beings. He was always delighted in honouring his relatives; he was always delighted in offering a lamp (to Viṣṇu). He spoke the truth; he had conquered his anger. He was harmless and without religious hypocrisy. O best brāhmaṇa, he, striving after final emancipation, always worshipped lord Viṣṇu, the highest god, with great devotion. The lord, knowing his very firm devotion, took away his entire wealth with some motive. Yet that very intelligent, best brāhmaṇa, everyday worshipped the noble Viṣṇu with great devotion. O brāhmaṇa, all his wealth earned with difficulty, perished. The brāhmaṇa, knowing the highest truth, seeing that also with grief that cannot be conceived by mind, gave up eating (food) after making his mind firm in the worship of the great Viṣṇu.

64-67. Knowing the devotion of that brāhmaṇa Viṣṇu, giving tranquillity, also again brought about the destruction of his relatives. O best brāhmaṇa, the brāhmaṇa's relatives, deluded by Viṣṇu's Māyā, always commenced doing harm (to others). The brāhmaṇa accomplished by means of restrictions and pleased, always worshipped Viṣṇu with great devotion. The brāhmaṇa, having made arrangement to secure money for the worship of Viṣṇu, (worshipped) Mādhava, the lord of the world, and gave up grief for his relatives.

68-69. O Jaimini, great Viṣṇu, though kind to him, being curious, took away even his sons day by day. Yet that best brāhmaṇa everyday worshipped Viṣṇu, the destroyer of distress, with double the former devotion.

70-73. O brāhmaṇa, then his wife, extremely distressed due to grief and affliction, and being deluded by Viṣṇu' s Māyā, went to her father's house. That lonely brāhmaṇa, highly given to Viṣṇu's devotion, never minded any calamity on account of his good heart. O best brāhmaṇa, once he, the best among Viṣṇu's devotees, taking an axe on his shoulder went to a forest. The brāhmaṇa, having no clothes, warded off cold everyday in winter after bringing wood from the forest.

74-77. Once the best brāhmaṇa was unable to go to the forest. (So) he cut off a branch of a holy fig tree standing in the courtyard (of his house). Meantime great Viṣṇu, the best of gods, with his mind distressed by agony came out of the holy

fig tree. In front of him the brāhmaṇa happily saw Viṣṇu, the highest god, having four arms, large eyes like lotus-petals, having worn a yellow garment, having ear-rings, good hair, and having his weapons like the lotus etc., resembling a new cloud, very much reddened in the evening, due to large streams of blood flowing (from his body), (resembling) fire, and invisible (even) to the hosts of gods. The brāhmaṇa with his pair of eyes charming due to streams of tears of joy, praised (him) with soft words.

The brāhmaṇa said:

78-85. O Hari, Murāri, the only lord of the world, Govinda, Dāmodara, Mādhava, lord of Lakṣmī, Keśava, enemy of Keśin, Nārāyaṇa, infinite one, lord, be pleased. How can I describe your advent? In this world there is none else except you. O Acyuta, having given one the entire world full of virtues or having given compassion whereby one looks upon one's own (persons) and others as equal, why do you, O Viṣṇu, why do you take away the devotion for you, which resides in one's body? By getting (i.e. if I get) wealth I shall give (i.e. part with) my joy. Devotion given to the great is very blessed. Since I constantly look upon the greatest sinner as a noble one, a sinner (like me) never sees your pair of feet meditated upon by gods. Though I am the greatest among the unhappy, yet I myself, with my eyes, am actually seeing you, like Indra, the soul of the worlds. I do not know even a small worship of you. Nor have I ever given any wealth to you. Yet, O Keśava, in front of me you, the only adorable one, are seen in a bodily form. You have given me this tree of devotion. It is full of piety, material welfare, and desire of sensual enjoyments. O lord, it, sprinkled with the water of your sight, has today borne the fruit of final emancipation. O Keśava, O you of a universal form, of all the heads in the world my head will be the best. O god of gods, my mind now goes to the couple of your lotus-like feet.

Vyāsa said:

86. That brāhmaṇa, having thus praised Jagannātha (i.e. lord of the world), Nārāyaṇa, Anāmaya, again, with the palms of his hands joined, devoutly spoke to him thus:

The brāhmaṇa said:

87-88. O god of gods, O lord of the world, O you who favour the world, with these strokes of the whip your body is wet with blood. In a battle you killed the members of the family of the demons. O lord, on the earth who is able to kill you? This is very wonderful.

The lord said:

89-90. O dear, you have undoubtedly spoken the truth. Neither a demon nor a fiend can kill me. O brāhmaṇa, I am just of the form of the holy fig tree. You cut me off with an axe. Therefore, there was now bleeding from my body.

Vyāsa said:

91-94. Hearing these words of him the brāhmaṇa, distressed with fear, censured himself in many ways. "Fie upon me, the unfortunate one and the greatest among sinners, who caused great grief to the heart of the lord of the three worlds. Viṣṇu removes all sins and he was hurt by me. Who can make me go beyond this sin? He, on whose being pleased sinners are honoured by gods, is distressed due to the trouble given by me. Oh, I am doomed!

95-96. I, a sinner, have caused pain to the heart of him whom gods like Brahmā please with great devotion. What is the use of austerities, mutterings of hymns, or life in the house to me, (since) this only giver of piety, material welfare, of sensual enjoyments and liberation is distressed with pain."

97-98. O best brāhmaṇa, speaking like this he decided to put that axe only at his throat (i.e. to cut off his throat with that axe), to please Viṣṇu. Seeing his great devotion, the kind lord of Lakṣmī, loving his devotees, quickly took it away from his hand.

The lord said:

99-100. O dear, how (i.e. why) do you do such a very dreadful act? I am never pleased with men who commit suicide? I am very much pleased with your devotion. O best one, do not entertain fear. O best brāhmaṇa, choose a boon that is in your mind.

The brāhmaṇa said:

101. O highest god, I caused great pain to you. O lord, may it not remain in your body. This is the boon I choose, O lord.

The lord said:

102-105a. O dear, O brāhmaṇa, you did this act through ignorance. You should not, therefore, even regard it as a great offence. I am always obedient to you, since you are the greatest among devotees. Everyday I know your errors (i.e. you erred). Yet your devotion for me always increased. Therefore, O dear, I now desire to be free from your debt. Giving up all fear, choose a boon in front of (i.e. from) me.

The brāhmaṇa said:

105b-106a. O Viṣṇu, O best god, may I have very strong devotion for you in every birth.

Vyāsa said:

106b-108a. Hearing these words of him spoken due to affection for Viṣṇu, (Viṣṇu) being pleased, then gave him the garland that was (put) around his own neck. Then as a father embraces his son, he embraced the brāhmaṇa, with his four long arms, and spoke (these) soft words (to him):

The lord said:

108b-114. O brāhmaṇa, since you are my devotee, therefore you will soon have all prosperity. O brāhmaṇa, O best one, everyday propitiate me in the form of the Aśvattha tree with the employment of (proper) rites. I shall accomplish all your desired objects.

Speaking like this to the best brāhmaṇa and embracing him again, Viṣṇu, the abode of compassion, disappeared just there. That best devotee of Viṣṇu, that brāhmaṇa, having received the garland from the neck of Viṣṇu, regarded himself as having done his duty and remained in his own house. Then, O brāhmaṇa sage, Kubera himself, by Viṣṇu's order, showered much wealth into his house. The architect (of gods) Viśvakarman fashioned for him, by Viṣṇu's order, an excellent palace like that of Indra.

It was having male and female servants. It was adorned with various things.

115-118. His abode crowded with crores of elephants and horses, shone. Even his relatives who were dead, were (again) united with him. His wife who had disrespected him, came home of her own accord. O brāhmaṇa, his wife whose sons were dead, had stable progeny due to the favour of Viṣṇu, and she was highly devoted to her husband. That best brāhmaṇa, having, for a long time, along with his sons and grandsons, enjoyed all pleasures, attained at the end of his life along with his wife liberation.

Vyāsa said:

119-120. The excellent, holy fig tree is actually Viṣṇu himself. Those men who worship it, never face any calamity. O best man, Viṣṇu, being pleased, gives him who, meditating upon Viṣṇu, worships the holy fig tree, the highest position.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Viṣṇu's Worship with Lotuses: The Story of Prajā

Vyāsa said:

1-4. O best brāhmaṇa, in the month of Jyeṣṭha (a man) should devoutly worship lord Viṣṇu after having bathed him (i.e. his image) with cold water. Everyday in summer unguents, fragrant āmalaka, fragrant oil should be offered to Viṣṇu. In a pavilion (having free access) to people he should everyday install (the image of) the lord of Lakṣmī in a temple which is made very fragrant, which is cool and very charming. One should not install (the image of) the lord of Lakṣmī in a hot place, in a place full of smoke or fuel, or in a lying-in chamber.

5-11. O best brāhmaṇa, what does the lord of Kamalā, very much pleased when fanned with very long, white chowries in Jyeṣṭha, not give? O best one, Viṣṇu fanned with fans made of the

feathers of peacocks in the summer soon gives everything that is desired. All those who fan Viṣṇu with breezes from a fan or from a pure (piece of) cloth, go to heaven. O best brāhmaṇa, one who in summer, when it arrives, smears the body of Mādhava with fragrant pastes or with sandal, enters his body. There is no doubt that he is liberated. One should install (the image of) Viṣṇu in a garden with blossoming flowers, so also in a tulasī-grove, having gentle breezes at twilight. He who has adorned Viṣṇu with pāṭala flowers in Jyeṣṭha, should be known to be the performer of a thousand horse-sacrifices.

12-16. Viṣṇu would give that man the position of a king in every birth, who would give a necklace of pearls to him in summer. O brāhmaṇa, listen to the fruit of the religious merit of him who decorates Śrī Kṛṣṇa with jewelled necklace, from me who am telling it. He, decorated with a jewelled necklace, would live in Viṣṇu's city till Brahmā creates the entire world, O Jaimini. He also, who decorates Kṛṣṇa with golden or silver ornaments in summer, would get the (same) fruit. He who gives god Viṣṇu a beautiful bed with a pillow, is never unhappy. In summer heavy garments should not be given (to Viṣṇu).

17-21. O best brāhmaṇa, light, pure silken garment should be given to Viṣṇu (in summer). He who would worship Viṣṇu with divine, fragrant fruits of acyuta (Morinda Tinctoria), would in the end go to Indra's city, and would gladly drink nectar (there). He too, who would worship Lakṣmī's lord with the divine fruits of priyāla (Buchanania Latifolia), would get the (same) fruit. What is the use of speaking so many words? That devotee of Viṣṇu, who devoutly offers in summer very cold rice-gruel with sauce (does not again drink the milk from a mother's breasts, i.e. is not reborn). O best brāhmaṇa, that wise man also, who, in the month of Āṣāḍha, would devoutly worship Viṣṇu, after bathing him (i.e. his image) with curd, does not again drink the milk from a mother's breasts (i.e. is not reborn).

22-23. O brāhmaṇa sage, he who at the advent of rainy season worships (Viṣṇu) dark like a cloud with kadamba flowers, would obtain the highest position. That brāhmaṇa whose pavilion looks like fire with garlands of kadamba flowers, would have the fruit of a horse sacrifice, O greatest brāhmaṇa.

24-25. O best brāhmaṇa, the lord of Lakṣmī worshipped

with fragrant ketakī flowers does remove all miseries of human beings. Lord Viṣṇu worshipped with divine, very ripe bread-fruits mixed with ghee, would give excellent affluence.

26-33. O best brāhmaṇa, a devotee of Viṣṇu, desiring liberation, should devoutly offer boiled rice mixed with curd to Viṣṇu everyday in the month of Āṣāḍha. That devotee of Viṣṇu who offers butter to Kṛṣṇa, is purified from all sins, and goes to Brahmā's world. He who would worship the highest soul with the flower of śephālikā (Vitex Negundo) and jasmine flowers, would go to the highest position. He who would worship Viṣṇu with full-blown fragrant, jasmine flowers, would not be (born) due to the religious merit on account of that, O brāhmaṇa. The man, worshipping Viṣṇu, the friend of the world, with kanda (Amorphophallus Campanulatus) flowers, obtains all his desired objects. Viṣṇu is always pleased with him who would worship Viṣṇu with large flowers and full-blown Barleria flowers. He who worships Viṣṇu with sairīyaka (Barleria Cristata) flowers, herb-flowers, and karavīra (Terminalia Arjuna) flowers, goes near Viṣṇu. O brāhmaṇa, all-round prosperity exists in the house of him who would offer parched grain with ghee to Viṣṇu in Śrāvaṇa.

34-35. O greatest brāhmaṇa, a wise man should devoutly worship Nārāyaṇa, Anāmaya, giving the four goals in human life, in the month of Bhādrapada. He should install (the image of) lord Viṣṇu having lotus-like eyes in a house newly constructed and free from every obstacle.

36-37. A man should not install (the image of) Viṣṇu in an old house crowded with gad-flies, mosquitoes and flies etc. A wise man should not install (the image of) the highest lord Viṣṇu in a house with mud, with its doors and walls falling down.

38-39. O best brāhmaṇa, a man who fashions a beautiful candrātapa (a hall with a roof only) in Viṣṇu's temple, goes to the world of the Moon. At night at the time of worship he should drive away, with many kinds of incense in the lord's temple, gad-flies and mosquitoes.

40. In rainy season he should install (the image of) Viṣṇu lying on a bed in a divine temple at night after covering him with emeralds.

41-42. He who desires liberation, should, everyday in the month of Bhādrapada worship the lord of gods with fresh, fragrant lotuses. He should not worship Viṣṇu with ketakī flowers in Bhādrapada, since in the month of Bhādrapada ketakī is like liquor.

43-45. He who worships Yadunandana (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) with ripe, divine palmyra fruits, does not again have the great trouble of remaining in the womb (i.e. being born). That man who devoutly would offer a ripe palmyra fruit mixed with ghee and milk to Viṣṇu would go to Viṣṇu's abode. O best brāhmaṇa, a devotee of Viṣṇu should offer, in the month of Bhādrapada, palmyra powder along with ghee to Viṣṇu in order to obtain the Absolute.

46. O brāhmaṇa, Viṣṇu's devotee, desiring liberation, should not eat any vegetable in the month of Bhādrapada. He should not eat at night.

47-49a. O best brāhmaṇa, Lakṣmī's lord accepts that water as nectar which people offer to him, O brāhmaṇa, and which removes distress, in the forenoon (of a day) in the month of Āśvina.

49b-50. O best brāhmaṇa, that water which is offered at midday to Viṣṇu, should be known as water, and he accepts it (as water). That water which is offered to Govinda in the afternoon, would be like blood. Viṣṇu does not accept it. Therefore, O best brāhmaṇa, one should worship Viṣṇu in the forenoon.

51-54a. Due to Viṣṇu's compassion one gets all desired objects. O best brāhmaṇa, one should not worship Viṣṇu while having (just) one garment on one's body. If one performs (Viṣṇu's) worship like that, Viṣṇu does not accept it. That worship of Viṣṇu which one performs, with the garment on one's body not washed, is fruitless; and Viṣṇu is not pleased. Those who, without tying the tuft of hair on the crowns of their heads, perform the worship of the Disc-holder (i.e. Viṣṇu), do not obtain the fruit of the worship. It would be accepted by hogs.

54b-56a. O best brāhmaṇa, that worship of Viṣṇu which is performed in a house that is not purified, would indeed be accepted by hogs. O brāhmaṇa, a wise man does not bathe, worship deities, give gifts or honour his manes without having (sectarian) marks (on his body).

56b-57a. That entire holy act which is done without having

sectarian marks on his body by a devotee, is reduced to ash. And the doer would be a resident of hell.

57b-60. O best brāhmaṇa, he whose body is marked with (the marks of) a conch, a disc, a mace, a lotus, should be known to be Viṣṇu himself. There is no doubt that he who would draw (the marks) of a conch and a lotus on his right hand, and (the marks of) a disc and a mace on his left hand is Viṣṇu (himself). All sin of him who would draw (the mark) of a lotus upon (the mark of) the conch perishes in a moment.

61. Even gods like Indra salute him who would draw (the mark of) a mace upon (that of) the disc, O brāhmaṇa. A wise man should also draw (the marks of) the couple of the feet of Viṣṇu on his forehead.

62-67. Seeing him, even a sinner becomes free from his sin(s). That best devotee of Viṣṇu who would draw on his chest the eight-syllabled great formula, (the marks of) a fish and a tortoise purifies the three worlds. Kṛṣṇa, the lord of the world, gives him whose body is everyday marked with drawings of Kṛṣṇa's weapons, the highest position. All that act, auspicious or inauspicious, that a man whose body is marked with (the drawings of) the weapons of Kṛṣṇa, would be inexhaustible. Seeing him having marks of the weapons of Kṛṣṇa on his body, all demons and fiends, so also spirits and vampires, goblins, serpents, yakṣas, vidyādharas, kinnaras, guhyakas, evil demons, young evil demons seizing upon children, so also (goblins called) kuṣmāṇḍas, female goblins, so also others that bring about obstacles, run (away) through fear.

68-70a. Elephants, tigers, so also other inhabitants of the forest, run away through fear on seeing him who is marked with (the drawings of) the weapons of Kṛṣṇa. Severe diseases like jaundice causing the fall of the body (also go away). That man, who devoutly sees the body (of a man) marked with (the drawings of) the weapons of Kṛṣṇa, gets the fruit equivalent to that of seeing Kṛṣṇa.

70b-72a. The progeny of him who would worship Viṣṇu in Āśvina with three-bladed dūrvā grass, proceeds without any interruption. O brāhmaṇa, in the heart of him who would offer a karkaṭī (Cucumis Utilissimus) fruit to Viṣṇu in the month of Āśvina, unhappiness is never produced.

72b-73a. A wise man should devoutly worship Dāmodara, god of gods, when the auspicious, the best of all months, viz. Kārtika has arrived.

73b-75a. O best brāhmaṇa, a wise man should bathe in the morning in the proper manner to please Viṣṇu in the month of Kārtika. He who would give up (eating) flesh, copulation in the month of Kārtika, goes to the highest position after being freed from sins committed during existence after existence.

75b-77a. O best brāhmaṇa, when the Sun enters the Libra sign of the Zodiac, a bath in the morning, offering of clarified butter and celibacy destroy great sins. O best brāhmaṇa, he who enjoys flesh, copulation in the month of Kārtika would become a village hog in existence after existence.

77b-79a. When the month of Kārtika has arrived, a devotee of Viṣṇu should, even with effort, avoid eating twice (a day), food of others and oil. O brāhmaṇa, I shall tell (you) in brief the fruit of (i.e. obtained by) him who offers a lamp to Viṣṇu in Śrāvaṇa. (Please) listen.

79b-80a. Being freed from agonising sins like those of the murder of a brāhmaṇa, he goes to the city of Dāmodara and would stay (there) for a period of a crore of yugas.

80b-81a. Seeing a lamp burning (before Viṣṇu's image) in Śrāvaṇa, all gods like Indra, being delighted, say to one another:

81b-82. "This one highly devoted to worshipping Viṣṇu is the best among the righteous souls, since he offers a lamp to the Disc-holder (Viṣṇu) in the month of Kārtika. O best brāhmaṇa, Viṣṇu is always pleased with him in the month of Kārtika.

83. That man who would continuously offer a lamp in Viṣṇu's temple in Kārtika, obtains the fruit of a horse-sacrifice everyday.

84. That man who would worship Viṣṇu with lakhs of tulasī leaves in Kārtika, obtains the fruit of a lakh of horse-sacrifices.

85. He who would worship the immutable Viṣṇu with a lakh of bilva-flowers, obtains liberation due to the favour of the lord of the world.

86. Whatever is given after dedicating it to Viṣṇu in Kārtika, all that would be inexhaustible. This is the truth told by me.

87. O brāhmaṇa, he who would offer the sura leaf smeared

with ghee everyday in the month of Kārtika, remains in front of Viṣṇu, O brāhmaṇa.

88-90. What is difficult on the earth for the best brāhmaṇa who would worship Lakṣmī's lord with a white or black lotus that is full-blown? What has he who has offered a lotus to Viṣṇu in the month of Kārtika, not given to Viṣṇu, the conqueror of the demons? What does the revered lord of Lakṣmī not give to him who just takes a lotus and offers it to the enemy of Kaiṭabha?

91. Lakṣmī (i.e. Prosperity) does not stay during existence after existence in the house of him who has not worshipped Viṣṇu with lotuses in the month of Kārtika.

92-93. He who would offer lotus-seeds to the magnanimous Viṣṇu, is born in a brāhmaṇa family in every existence. He, born in a brāhmaṇa family, would be the friend of the four Vedas, be wealthy, have many sons and maintain the members of his family.

94-95. O Jaimini, I tell you the truth: There is no (other) flower like a lotus with which even a sinner having worshipped Viṣṇu enjoys liberation. O best brāhmaṇa, I shall especially tell the greatness of lotus, along with its history. Listen to it attentively.

96-100. There was a brāhmaṇa named Prajā, who knew all branches of holy literature, and the bee of whose mind always remained in the lotus of Viṣṇu's feet. (Abandoning) hundreds of acts fit and unfit to be done, he always worshipped deities, brāhmaṇas and preceptors (or elderly persons). To him the wealth of others was like poison. Wives of others were to him like his own mother. He did to his enemy what he did to his friend. That brāhmaṇa, knowing the sublime truth, did not have much regard on seeing a best brāhmaṇa as a guest or a suppliant. Desiring to cross the fearful, boundless ocean of the mundane existence, he performed all (kinds of) sacrifices and observed all vows.

101-102. Once that best brāhmaṇa, highly given to devotion for Viṣṇu, thought in his mind about his death and birth: 'Who was I formerly? What act have I done formerly? How have I got this (birth)? Where shall I go again?'

103. Thinking like this and sighing repeatedly, that

brāhmaṇa went to a place sacred to Śiva to know his former account.

104. There, the brāhmaṇa with the palms of his hands joined, praised god Śiva with great devotion and with sweet words.

The brāhmaṇa said:

105-115. O great god, salutation to you. O highest god, salutation to you. O Śaṅkara, O Īśāna, O you giver of boons, O you lord, salutation to you. Salutation to you, of the form of knowledge; salutation to you the giver of knowledge. Salutation to you living in the lotuses of the hearts of all beings. Salutation to you, the creator of the world. Repeated salutations to you, the father of the world. Salutation to you, the destroyer (of the world). Salutation to you, the lord of beings. Salutation to you, Vahninetra (having fire-like eyes). Salutation to you Vahnicakṣus (having fire in your eye). Salutation to you, having the moon and the sun as your eyes. Salutation to you, decorated with ash; salutation to you, wearing a hide; salutation to you, having a string of bones; salutation to you, Nīlakaṇṭha. Salutation to you, Pañcavaktra (having five faces); salutation to you having the trident in your hand; to you who destroyed the pride of Cupid; and to you of a fierce form. Salutation to you, god of gods; salutation to you, Tripura's enemy. Salutation to you, the lord of Pārvatī; salutation to you, of a fierce form. Salutation to you whose mind was very much pleased with Bāṇa's devotion. Salutation to you of many forms and of a universal form. Salutation to you, Gaṅgādhara (who sustains Gaṅgā on his head); to you, the destroyer of Dakṣa's sacrifice. Salutation to you, the lord of the evil spirits; to the holder of (the bow) Pināka. Salutation to you, Īśāna; salutation to you, Manīśa. Salutation to you, the visible and the invisible one. Salutation to you who can and cannot be discovered. You alone are Brahmā; you alone are the lord of gods, Viṣṇu; you alone are the Sun. You alone are the Moon, removing all afflictions. Repeated salutations to you, the highest god.

116-118. Having heard his eulogy, Śaṅkara, the highest lord, who brings about the welfare of the world, was pleased, and suddenly manifested himself (before him). The very devout

brāhmaṇa, seeing him, saluted by all gods to have manifested himself, saluted his feet. The best brāhmaṇa, with his mind full of joy and with the palms of his hands folded, also again praised Mahādeva, the lord, who grants boons.

119-122. "I actually see him, the lord of gods, whom even gods including Indra do not (i.e. are unable to) see. This is my great fortune. I actually see that highest god who cannot be seen with the mind set upon meditation. What else have I to accomplish? I see that lord by merely remembering whose name even great sinners go to the highest position. I am blessed, I am blessed, I am blessed, and I am fortunate. O highest god, repeated salutations to you. Be pleased."

Mahādeva said:

123. O best brāhmaṇa, with these words of you I am pleased. O glorious one, ask for a boon. I indeed desire to grant a boon.

The brāhmaṇa said:

124-127. O lord, I am actually seeing you, the highest soul, who cannot be seen even by deities. What is the use of other boons? Yet, O great god, you, full of pity, desire to grant a boon. O highest lord, I ask you something. Tell (i.e. answer) it. O god, who was I formerly? What acts did I do formerly? O lord, how have I fallen into this ocean of worldly existence? A body is obtained through acts. A man is smeared with sin. Again as a result of the sin miserable position is had.

128-130. Due to which acts have I obtained this existence full of many miseries? O Śaṅkara, be pleased, and tell it. This existence is the root of sins. Existence is the cause of misery. Therefore, I desire to know my former account. Due to the maturity of my acts, I, tormented by the digestive fire of the stomach, remained in my mother's womb mixed with urine and feces.

131-134. In the worldly existence no other affliction is said to be equal to that due to remaining in the womb. O lord, O you who remove the misery of your devotees, how did I experience it? O Śiva, O lord of the worlds, how have I fallen into this very fierce, worthless, limitless mundane existence which is full of various miseries, which is deluded by Viṣṇu's Māyā, which has

supported sins, which is difficult to cross, which is without kinsmen, which is full of desire for sexual union and anger, which gives affliction and attachment, which also gives birth and death? O lord, if you favour, then tell (i.e. explain) all this to me.

Mahādeva said:

135-136. O best brāhmaṇa, even though this is a great secret among secrets (i.e. the greatest secret), and (therefore) is not to be divulged, yet I shall tell it to you (my) devotee. O best brāhmaṇa, formerly you were born in the family of mountaineers. You were known as Daṇḍapāṇi, and you lived by giving trouble to good people.

137-138. Abandoned by discrimination, and having abandoned the fear of the other world, you took to the livelihood of bandits, which caused great affliction and agony to those who were distressed. Seeing you, the extremely cruel one, to have taken to the livelihood of a robber your other brothers also became robbers.

139-143. O best brāhmaṇa, I (shall) tell you the names of your brothers with whom you formerly committed robbery: These six—Daṇḍin, Daṇḍāyudha, and Dattavān, Dattabhū, Sudaṇḍa, Daṇḍaketu—are said to be your brothers. Along with those very fierce and cruel brothers of yours, you always frightened all people with a club. O brāhmaṇa, due to greed for money, you, along with those wicked brothers of yours, killed hundreds of thousands (of people) in the forest on a desolate road. O brāhmaṇa, you, remaining in the forest, and killing with sharp arrows (cows), always ate the raw flesh of cows along with liquor.

144-145. Then all traders gave up using vehicles. A great calamity always befell (travellers) in that forest. When you took to robbery, the wealth of a man did not remain his wealth, the house of a man did not remain his house, and the wife of a man did not remain his wife.

146. In this way in that very great forest, you, along with those brothers of yours (once) after being fatigued due to the journey went to a lake for bathing.

147-148. O best brāhmaṇa, having bathed there you along with your brothers, being hungry, ate lotus-stalks and (drank)

water. O greatest brāhmaṇa, O best one, there you ate, through curiosity, many full-blown lotuses.

149-150. Just at that time, a brāhmaṇa, known as Sarvavedas, roaming in the forest, came there for bathing. The religious-minded one, having bathed there, and desiring to worship Viṣṇu, politely asked you for your lotus.

151-154. Then, O best brāhmaṇa, you gave him, with great devotion, a very clean lotus for the worship of the lord of Lakṣmī. That best brāhmaṇa was pleased with the lotus given by you. And just there he worshipped Viṣṇu, bringing about everything. Seeing that brāhmaṇa absorbed in worshipping Viṣṇu, you too laughed and saluted Viṣṇu, the good giver of desired objects. That brāhmaṇa, having worshipped duly the highest soul, the giver of the fruit of the four goals of human life, went as he had come.

155-156. O best one, due to the present of the lotus and the salutation, and due to seeing Viṣṇu's worship, all your sin perished. O excellent brāhmaṇa, after a few days you, whose death was imminent, died in that great forest only.

157-159. The lord, the abode of compassion, pleased with just that act of yours gave you the highest place, very difficult to be obtained even by gods. Due to the favour of Lakṣmī's lord you enjoyed various pleasures there for thousands and hundreds of Manu-periods. Then at the end of (i.e. after the fruit of your) acts (was enjoyed), you came to this land of religious rites and were born in a brāhmaṇa family due to the fruits of that religious merit.

160-162. O best one, having secured a birth in a pure brāhmaṇa family, you obtained steady devotion for Viṣṇu, which is the abode of all virtues. The lord, the great Viṣṇu propitiated by you with the yoga of (ritual) acts, will give you special knowledge. And you will be liberated by means of (that) knowledge. O brāhmaṇa, being very much pleased, go home. Well-being to you. You have obtained my sight. You are freed from the bond of the worldly existence.

Vyāsa said:

163-164. O brāhmaṇa, having spoken like that, the lord of the world vanished there only. That brāhmaṇa also, being satis-

fied, went home. To glorify the highest lord Viṣṇu he with effort worshipped him day and night with lovely lotuses.

165-169. Having worshipped Viṣṇu with lotuses, beautiful, good flowers, he slept for a long time. Having obtained knowledge, he attained liberation through the favour of the Garuḍa-bannered (god). If such is the fruit of (i.e. obtained by) him who offers a lotus to Viṣṇu even unintentionally, then what would be the fruit of (i.e. obtained by) him who offers it intentionally? I am telling the truth. I am again telling the truth (only). By worshipping Viṣṇu with lotuses one obtains the highest position. He who offers a lotus (even) once to Mura's enemy, is not reborn in this fearful worldly existence. Those full of major sins, even great sinners who worship Viṣṇu giving desired objects with full-blown lotuses even one day, go to (i.e. obtain) liberation.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Prohibition regarding and Fruit of Viṣṇu Worship

Vyāsa said:

1-10. A devotee of Viṣṇu should devoutly worship the immutable Viṣṇu along with the great Lakṣmī in Mārgaśīrṣa, O best brāhmaṇa. So also he should not worship Viṣṇu in a Mleccha region, in the house of a fallen person, or at a place full of bad odour, O best brāhmaṇa. He should not worship Viṣṇu near the heretics or great sinners, so also near those who tell lies. He should not worship Viṣṇu near those who are crying, who are quarrelling or at the place of those who are ridiculing. He should not worship Viṣṇu at the place of those who are engaged in accepting gifts, so also in the house of misers and of those who are greedy of others' wealth. So also he should not worship Viṣṇu in the house of those whose nature is deceitful. O brāhmaṇa, being highly devoted, he should, giving up attention to any other thing, be intent on meditating upon Viṣṇu at the time of worshipping Viṣṇu. He should not worship Viṣṇu, when there is loud wailing, when there are sighs, when there is a

doubt, or a talk with the heretics, O best brāhmaṇa. Viṣṇu receives that flower which is offered even into ash by him whose mind is concentrated, to the god of gods, the lord of the world. O brāhmaṇa, the lord does not receive that flower which a man fatigued due to hundreds of thoughts, offers even on the discs of the (śālagrāma) stones. With an undivided mind a wise man should worship Viṣṇu.

11. That act which is done with a confused mind is fruitless. Every act depends upon the mind. The three worlds depend upon the mind.

12-16a. Therefore, after making his mind steady he should worship Lakṣmī's lord. O best brāhmaṇa, he who worships at one place, but whose mind is somewhere else, would not get the fruit of his act even after hundreds of crores of kalpas. He who has become (bodily) pure with effort, and engaged in Viṣṇu's worship, is taken to be like a cāṇḍāla if he is without the purity of mind. O brāhmaṇa, that penance which is duly performed for a long time, but without devotion, would all be fruitless, and would only purify the body. That gold, (even) as much as the measure of Meru (mountain), which is given without devotion to a brāhmaṇa with family for (securing) beatitude leads to the loss of the desired object.

16b-25a. Therefore, a devotee with a concentrated mind and full of faith and devotion, should give in his house vegetables with a dwelling etc. to Viṣṇu. O best brāhmaṇa, he who offers a very ripe, divine, orange to Viṣṇu is honoured by us. A devotee should devoutly and with effort give a new thing dear to Viṣṇu, to him, the enemy of Mura, in the month of Mārgaśīrṣa. The devotee of Viṣṇu should bathe with divine sugarcane juice (the image of) god Viṣṇu, the lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who grants boons, when the month of Pauṣa has come. O best brāhmaṇa, he who bathes (the image of) Viṣṇu with sugarcane juice, enjoys all pleasures here (i.e. in this world) and after death goes to the Ikṣu-sāgara. So also he who would offer the sugarcane as an eatable to Viṣṇu, the god of gods, obtains the same fruit. What is the use of uttering many (more) words? A man by giving rice parched and flattened along with milk or with curd to Viṣṇu, would obtain all desired objects. Having removed the old garment (from Viṣṇu's image), he should offer him a new (piece of) cloth for

keeping off cold, O brāhmaṇa, when the Sun passes from one Zodiacal sign to another. In Pauṣa (when he is in the Puṣya asterism), a man desiring liberation should give to Viṣṇu with Lakṣmī, a seat of ten colours.

25b-31a. O dear, I (shall) tell (you) the fruit of the religious merit of him who, after worshipping the lord of Lakṣmī, would blow a conch. Listen to it. Being freed from all sins like illicit intercourse, he in the end goes to Viṣṇu's city and rejoices with him. O best brāhmaṇa, I (shall) tell you about the religious merit of him who sounds at the time of (Viṣṇu's) worship a bell marked with Garuḍa. He, being freed from all sins like eating articles that are prohibited, goes after getting into a charming chariot to Viṣṇu's abode. Having enjoyed there all desired objects for a period of hundreds of crores of kalpas, he again comes to (i.e. is born on) the earth as a best brāhmaṇa, well-versed in the four Vedas. Having enjoyed there all desired objects for a period of hundreds of crores of kalpas, he again goes to Viṣṇu's city and obtains excellent liberation.

31b-36a. That man who plays upon the lute at the time of worship of the lord, would become the chief among the learned in every existence. The lord, being pleased with him who beats a tabor at the time of the worship of the enemy of Kaiṭabha, gives him immense fruit. Listen to the religious merit of (i.e. got by) him who beats a small drum shaped like an hourglass, a small drum, or who sounds sweet cymbals, or beats a tabor, a large kettle-drum, a large drum, a sindhuvāraka (?), a gong of bell-metal, or claps, or plays upon a lute, at the time of (Viṣṇu's) worship; being freed from sins like theft, he goes to the abode of the Disc-holder (i.e. Viṣṇu).

36b-37. Getting the highest knowledge (there), he is freed there only. O best brāhmaṇa, I tell (you) about the religious merit of him who would produce sweet sound at the time of the worship of the lord of the world, or would play on the wind-instrument. With crores and crores (members) of his family, he goes to Viṣṇu's abode.

38-42. Having obtained knowledge, he would obtain inexhaustible liberation there only. O best brāhmaṇa, he who devoutly dances in the temple of Viṣṇu, goes to that highest position of Viṣṇu. He who devoutly sings songs in front (of the image) of

Viṣṇu, becomes a king in cities of gandharvas. With that devotee of Viṣṇu, who devoutly praises the lord of the world with hymns of praise, the lord is pleased and gives him all his desired objects. O brāhmaṇa sage, that Viṣṇu soon favours him who would worship Viṣṇu in this manner every month.

43. All those men who desire to cross this mundane ocean which is very deep and which gives all afflictions, should worship the pair of the lotus-like feet of the Supreme Spirit, that is charming and served by the hosts of gods.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Efficacy of Rāma's Name

Vyāsa said:

1-3. O brāhmaṇa, listen. I (shall) again tell you about the greatness of Viṣṇu, having heard which a man becomes free from all sins. O best brāhmaṇa, this entire world is a portion of Viṣṇu. Therefore, those wise men who desire the highest knowledge, look upon it as full of Viṣṇu. All gods like Brahmā, Śaṅkara, Rudra are Viṣṇu's portions. Therefore, worship offered to all gods, goes to Viṣṇu alone.

4-6. By this means or that no inauspicious (things) ever take place in the case of those who remember Viṣṇu's names, removing all sins. O best brāhmaṇa, everything is said to be a sin due to the act (involved in it). (But) the recollection of Viṣṇu is indestructible and destroys sins. A devotee of Viṣṇu, desiring liberation, should, while sleeping, eating, speaking, remaining (at one place), getting up, walking constantly remember Viṣṇu.

7-8. No exalted sages have laid down any restriction about time, destroying all afflictions, on the recollection of Lakṣmī's lord. O brāhmaṇa sage, I (shall) tell (you) in brief about the efficacy of the name of the magnanimous Viṣṇu, along with its history. Listen.

9-10. Formerly, in Kṛta age, there lived a vaiśya named Paraśu, who was the greatest in the family of vaiśyas and who

had mastered all virtues. O brāhmaṇa, due to (ill) luck, that vaiśya, suffering from cough and asthma, died in his youth.

11-14. His wife of a beautiful waist and quite young, and named Jīvantī, went to her father's house after her husband was dead. O best brāhmaṇa, since that Jīvantī was proud of the prime of her youth, she went to paramours, though checked by her relatives. She, in the prime of her youth and with her heart attached to the paramours, gave up observing vows and domestic duties. O best brāhmaṇa, she of beautiful buttocks and stout breasts, was blinded by lust, and never followed a religious path.

15-17. Her father, devoted to piety, seeing her of a bad character, was afraid of infamy, and being very angry, spoke to her thus: "O wicked one, O sinner, having secured a birth in my family, without any blemish, why do you commit (this) sin? If you have (set) your mind on (committing) a sin, then there is no (food here for you) to eat. O you inauspicious one, go (away) from my house. Leave my house."

18-19. Thus addressed by her father, she, with her eyes red through anger, left her father's house and went as she pleased. Then that woman moving with a desire for (having) a paramour, and being shameless, lived after resorting to the way of a prostitute.

20-21. A pulinda, a mountaineer or even a cāṇḍāla came to her house, and the unchaste woman, with pleasure sported with him. That prostitute never properly entertained in her mind the fear of the next world, O brāhmaṇa.

22-28. O best brāhmaṇa, sometime a fowler, carrying the young one of a parrot, came to her house to sell it. That prostitute too took (i.e. bought) that excellent young one of a parrot with great delight after honouring the fowler with much wealth. Out of curiosity the prostitute everyday nourished the parrot by (giving) proper food. The prostitute who was childless, nourished that young one of a parrot, looking upon it as her own son. O best brāhmaṇa, that bird too by her order always behaved affectionately with her like her relative. Then that prostitute always taught the parrot that had developed devotion for her the name of Rāma with beautiful letters. That parrot always repeated the name of Rāma, the highest Brahman, great and superior to all (other) gods, and destroying all sins.

29-30. Due to just uttering the name of Rāma the entire, very fierce sin of the parrot and the prostitute perished. O best brāhmaṇa, that prominent prostitute, so also the parrot, both died at the same time.

31-32. Then king Dharma (i.e. Yama) sent his servants like Caṇḍa to bring the two who had committed all sins (to him). Then all those very speedy servants with nooses and mallets in their hands came (there) by Yama's order.

33-34. All the servants of Viṣṇu, as valourous as Viṣṇu (himself), (also) came (there). Seeing the two bound by nooses and lying on the ground, the angry servants of Viṣṇu said to the unconquerable messengers of Yama these words:

Viṣṇu's messengers said:

35-37. Oh, strange are the words heard by us (coming) from your mouths, O messengers of Yama, that these two though devoted to Viṣṇu, are being punished by (Yama) the Sun's son. Oh, the behaviour of the wicked is never excellent, since even with efforts they always harm the good. Wonderful is this behaviour of the wicked who have committed sins.

38-41. The religious-minded ones always look upon the entire world as sinless. The sinners do not look upon it like that. They look upon the entire world as having committed sins. The religious ones rejoice on hearing about the religious merit of the righteous; (but) the sinful persons are delighted on hearing about the sin(s) of the sinful ones. The sinful ones are not so much gratified after getting hundreds of bhāras of gold, as they are after hearing the discussion about sins. Oh, powerful is the Māyā (Illusive Power) of the noble, great Viṣṇu, (since, due to it) sinners commit a sin (in spite of its being) painful to their selves, O brāhmaṇa.

Vyāsa said:

42-43. Speaking like this, Viṣṇu's messengers, highly engaged in devotion for Viṣṇu, cut off their bonds with the edge of their discs, O brāhmaṇa. Then Yama's servants got angry. They, resembling fire, all of a sudden showered heaps of burning charcoals there.

Daṇḍa (Caṇḍa?) said:

44-45. To take the parrot and the sinful prostitute I have arranged like this; and you have (also) come. It is simply wonderful. O best ones, if you desire to take these two, then now fight with us.

46-47. Speaking like this, all the strong, haughty messengers of Yama, who had held weapons, filled the quarters with lion-like roars. So also the magnanimous messengers of Viṣṇu like Supratīka, made the world full of sound with very charming sounds of conches.

48-53. In that very fierce battle, the great messengers of Yama then covered those messengers of Viṣṇu with arrows discharged from (their) bows. In that great ocean (of battle) some angrily discharged spears, some discharged (the missiles called) śakti, some discharged thousands of arrows and some discharged discs. The messengers of Viṣṇu, the great deities, pounded with weapons like maces the great missiles discharged by them. Then the followers of Viṣṇu cut off the feet of certain messengers of Yama and the hands of some with the edge of their discs. Some with their heads out off, some with their chests pierced, some with very amazing wounds, some with their mouths wide open, dropped dead (on the ground). The followers of Yama, with one foot of some cut off, with one hand of some cut off, suddenly left the battle, and fled away from it.

54-55. Seeing those messengers intent on fleeing, Caṇḍa holding a mallet, angrily entered the battle. Caṇḍa, the greatest among the host of Yama's messengers, and very brave, struck with mallets Viṣṇu's servants in hundreds.

56-57. Then Viṣṇu's messengers quickly showered Caṇḍa of a fearful valour with showers of sharp weapons. Then Caṇḍa with his body wetted with flowing blood, struck separately Viṣṇu's messengers.

58-68. The lord's messengers, struck by that Caṇḍa in the battle, gave up their spirit and went behind Suprakāśa. Then that angry and very strong Suprakāśa, having eyes (red) like the japā-flowers, taking a mace in his hand, entered the battle (going on) on the battlefield. He who was angry, and who resembled Viṣṇu in valour, struck (him). From the mallet in Caṇḍa's hand, which

frightened the onlookers, a (column of) smoke having the smell of pus, rose. From him who was struck by the quick Caṇḍa, very fearful shower of sparks of fire was discharged. Then the angry Caṇḍa, struck, with that mallet only the very powerful Suprakāśa, O brāhmaṇa sage. Then, O brāhmaṇa, that Suprakāśa who was angry, forgot his pain and struck Caṇḍa, Yama's servant, with a mace. O Jaimini, Caṇḍa, struck by him, was wetted with blood, and he, resembling the young sun, fell unconscious on the ground. Then those messengers of Yama took Caṇḍa, who was in a swoon, and making a loud wailing, and being afraid of the battle, fled away. O brāhmaṇa, O Jaimini, O best brāhmaṇa, all the messengers of Viṣṇu, being very much delighted, blew (their) conches. Then those servants of Yama, wetted with streams of blood, overcome by fear and crying, approached Yama.

Yama's messengers said:

69-72. O Sun's son, O you of large arms, we are obedient to you. Yet the messengers of Viṣṇu have reduced us to such a miserable plight. O lord, though the two (i.e. the prostitute and the parrot) were greatest among sinners, they went to Viṣṇu's abode due to the efficacy of Rāma's name. Even those wicked sinners who are fit to be punished by you, go to Viṣṇu's city! What is your authority then? Oh, the messengers have not done this insult to us. It is, O lord, your insult only, since we are (just your) servants.

Yama said:

73-74. O messengers, they recollect the pair of letters—Rāma's name. So they are not to be punished by me. Viṣṇu is the lord of the two. Listen, O servants, there is no sin in the worldly existence, which does not instantly and thoroughly perish by recollection of Rāma.

75-80. O soldiers, those men who everyday devoutly remember the names which destroy heaps of sins, of Viṣṇu, worshipped by the best among the wise, are not at all fit to be punished by me, even though they are sinners. Those men who, on the earth, utter constantly and devoutly (the names) Govinda, Keśava, Hari, Jagadīśa, Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa, affectionate to those who are humble, and Mādhava are not fit to be punished by me, even

though they are great sinners, O soldiers. O soldiers, those men who, on the earth, constantly utter (words like) 'O destroyer of the affliction of (your) devotees', 'O lord of gods', 'O friend of the distressed', 'O lord of Lakṣmī', 'O you destroyer of all sins', are not fit to be punished by me even though they are great sinners. O messengers, everyday I salute even those in (i.e. by) whose mouths words like 'Dāmodara', 'Chief of gods', 'One who is fit to be served by the hosts of gods', 'Śrī Vāsudeva', 'Puruṣottama' (and) 'Mādhava' are uttered. O best soldiers, I am always subservient to those men whose very kind heart is always engaged in the reflections on Viṣṇu, Mura's enemy, and the only lord of the world, and who resort to the form of the lotus-eyed (Viṣṇu). O soldiers, even though those who are engaged in Viṣṇu's worship, who are devoted to Viṣṇu's devotees, who are engrossed in the Ekādaśī vow, who are free from fraud, who carry on their heads the water (flowing) from Viṣṇu's feet, are great sinners, they are not fit to be punished by me.

81-82. O soldiers, I salute them who enjoy the remains of the offerings of eatable made to Viṣṇu, which destroy the entire heap (of sins), and who always carry on their ears and head, a tulasī-leaf. O soldiers, I am always dependent on them who are eagerly engaged in worshipping Kṛṣṇa's feet, who are engaged in honouring brāhmaṇas, who resort to virtues, who give great joy to the hearts of the distressed people.

83-85. O soldiers, those men who are always given to speaking the truth, who are dear to people, who are like regents of the quarters to those who have resorted to them, who always look upon others' wealth as poison, are not fit to be punished by me. O messengers, they who are engaged in offering food, who offer water (to the thirsty), who give land, who desire the good of all people, who gratify those people who have no livelihood, who have curbed their senses, who are tranquil, are never to be punished by me. I never make any inquiry of them who speak pleasing word, whose minds are free from hypocrisy, anger, pride and jealousy, who do not have a sinful attitude, and who have controlled their senses.

Vyāsa said:

86-89. When the servants of Yama were thus informed by

Yama, they knew the incomparable glory of Viṣṇu, the lord of the world. O best brāhmaṇa, names of Viṣṇu are superior to (the names of) all (other) gods. The knowers of Brahman have declared Rāma's name to be the best among them. O brāhmaṇa, the couple of letters, viz. Rā-ma, is superior to all magical formulas, by just uttering which a sinner goes to the highest position. Śiva alone and none else knows the efficacy of Rāma's name (which is) the worship of all deities.

90-92. A man gets the same fruit even by recollecting Rāma's name as he gets by reciting the thousand names of Viṣṇu. Oh, wonderful is said to be the behaviour of men, that the wicked-hearted ones do not recollect the name 'Rāma' which gives liberation. To utter it there is not the least effort. It is very charming to hear. Yet the wicked-hearted ones do not utter (the name) 'Rāma, Rāma'.

93-94. In the world, liberation which is attained with great difficulty, is attained by Rāma's name only. What other (better) act can be there? So long as men do not recollect Rāma's name giving pleasure, sins remain in their bodies.

95-97. A wise man desiring the fruit of that act should devoutly remember (the name) 'Rāma, Rāma' at a śrāddha, at the time of offering oblations to the manes, at the time of offering a portion of the daily meal to all creatures, so also at a festival, at a sacrifice, at the time of (making) a present, at the time of a vow, so also at the time of the worship of a deity, so also at other Vedic rites. O best brāhmaṇa, he who would mutter the formula '*Namo Rāmāya*' (salutation to Rāma) preceded by Oṁkāra, obtains absorption into Viṣṇu.

98. A man worshipping Viṣṇu with (this) formula of six letters, obtains all his desired objects through the grace of the Disc-holder (i.e. Viṣṇu).

99-103. O greatest brāhmaṇa, that man who at the time of death would remember (the name) 'Rāma, Rāma' obtains liberation, even though he is the most sinful. There is no doubt that the wise ones who remember the name Rāma while on a pilgrimage, would get success in everything. O brāhmaṇa, he who would remember Rāma's name in a forest, on a desolate road, or even at a frightful cremation ground would not face calamities. A man remembering Rāma's name at the royal gate, at a difficult

place, in a foreign country, in front of bandits, on seeing a bad dream, so also at the time of trouble caused by Planets, at the time of fear due to portents, so also at the time of fear due to the disease of gout, meets with nothing unfortunate, O Jaimini.

104-105. The wise should always remember Rāma's name which removes all calamities, which gives desired objects and liberation. O brāhmaṇa sage, that moment at which Rāma's name is not remembered, would be only useless. I am telling the truth.

106. Men, remembering Viṣṇu's names, do not sink down; and a man desiring the destruction of sins (committed) during crores of existences obtains affluence on the earth, and constantly remembers with devotion the very sweet name of Viṣṇu, giving liberation.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Cakrika's Story

Vyāsa said:

1. O greatest brāhmaṇa, I am again describing the greatness of Viṣṇu, the highest soul, which destroys all unhappiness. (Please) listen.

2-3. Those brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, śūdras and others belonging to the lowest castes, who resort to Viṣṇu's devotion, are fortunate. There is no doubt about this. A brāhmaṇa who is not a devotee of Viṣṇu, should be known to be inferior to a cāṇḍāla, while a cāṇḍāla who is devoted to Viṣṇu, should be known to be superior to a brāhmaṇa.

4. How can he who is without devotion for Viṣṇu, be a brāhmaṇa? And how can he, in whose mind there is devotion for Viṣṇu, be a cāṇḍāla?

5. One should look upon that cāṇḍāla when he honestly worships Viṣṇu, to be superior to a brāhmaṇa knowing (all) the four Vedas.

6-16. Formerly in the yuga called Dvāpara, there was a mountaineer named Cakrika, who tilled (others') land and who did not have a good birth (i.e. birth in a good family) but was without a good livelihood. He talked like brāhmaṇas, had curbed his anger, was free from harming others, kind, without hypocrisy, and highly devoted to his father and mother. He had not talked about Viṣṇu; he had not learnt the holy texts about liberation. Yet there arose in his mind steady devotion for Viṣṇu. Everyday he remembered names of the Disc-holder (Viṣṇu) like Hari, Keśava, Govinda, Vāsudeva, Janārdana. He, born in a mountaineer's family, first put into his own mouth whatever wild fruit he had obtained. He then knowing its sweetness and taking it out of his mouth again and being very much pleased, everyday offered it to Viṣṇu. He did not discriminate between what is defiled (by being tasted by the mouth) and what is not. The habit of one's own class always remains at the top (i.e. prevails). O greatest brāhmaṇa, once he, while roaming in a forest, found a ripe fruit of priyāla tree. He, not finding (such) a fruit (before), was delighted, and to know (its taste) he hastily put it into his mouth. O Jaimini, just when he put the fruit into his mouth, it got into his throat, O brāhmaṇa. O brāhmaṇa, holding (his throat) carefully with his left hand, he arrested (the downward movement of the fruit through) the entire cavity of his throat with his right hand.

17-20. Then Cakrika, solely absorbed in devotion for Viṣṇu, thought: 'If I do not offer this fruit to that enemy of Mura, then no sinner like me is born in the worldly existence.' Meditating on Viṣṇu in various ways he then decided. Yet that fruit did not come out of his throat, O brāhmaṇa. That exclusive devotee of Viṣṇu cut his throat with an axe. He brought (out) that fruit (from his throat) and offered it to Viṣṇu. He, thinking about him only in his heart, approached him.

21-22. And with his entire body wetted with blood, he fell on the ground. Seeing him dead, lord Viṣṇu was distressed. "There is no (other) devotee like him, since, he having cut his throat, pleased me.

23-25. Since this devoted one has done a good act, what object can there be, by giving which I can be free from his debt? He is blessed, he is very blessed. He is undoubtedly blessed.

Even sacrificing his life, he has pleased me. I do not know whether I (should) give him the position of Brahmā, or of Śiva or an emperor and be free from his debt."

26-27. Saying so, and being very much pleased, the Garuḍa-bannered god touched his head with the lotus in his own hand. Due to the touch of the lotus in his hand, that mountaineer, freed from the anguish, solely devoted to Viṣṇu, got up with great vigour.

Vyāsa said:

28-29. Then Viṣṇu cleaned the dust on the body of that greatest devotee with his own garment as a father (cleans the dust on the body of his son), O brāhmaṇa. Cakrika, seeing Viṣṇu in an embodied form, humbly bent down his head, and with the palms of his hands joined, praised him with sweet words.

Cakrika said:

30-32. O Govinda, Keśava, Hari, Jagadīśa, Viṣṇu, though I do not know (i.e. find) words proper for your praise, yet my tongue desires to praise you. O lord, be pleased; remove this enhanced blemish. O lord of everything, O you having the disc in your hand, those men who, leaving you, worship another god in the world are just fools, since you are favouring even me who am the abode of the heap of sins only. Though I who am extremely sinful and who have been born in a mountaineer's family, know you (only) through devotion for you which removes the bond of the mundane existence of men, yet the lord is very much pleased with me, O you, the only lord of the world.

33-37. O lord, I have today gained the touch of your charming, lotus-like hands which even hosts of gods led by Brahmā do not obtain. There is no one (more) kind than you to his servants. Salutation to you, the most auspicious (god), who, the lord, for the good of the group of gods like Indra, formerly (killed) the demon Kaṁsa, the first enemy of gods, and Nimi's son who had committed all sins. Salutation to you resembling a fresh cloud, who, the very powerful son of Vasudeva and the best god killed the twin Arjuna trees, so also the wicked Kālayavana in a battle, so also Dhenuka. O Śrī Kṛṣṇa, O Dāmodara, O Ananta, salutation to you, the best in Yadu family, who, the lord, the highest

god, formerly gave steady prosperity to the lord of gods (i.e. Indra). Repeated salutations to you who took away the pārijāta tree, who vanquished Indra and easily conquered Maheśa.

38-40a. Making Bhīma the instrument you knocked down Jarāsandha. The arms of Bāṇāsura struck by you, perished. I always salute him who killed Śiśupāla. Constant and repeated salutations to him who, the noble one, having killed the kṣatriyas through his Māyā, removed the burden of the earth.

Vyāsa said:

40b-41a. O Jaimini, Viṣṇu, thus praised by the magnanimous Cakrika, being very much pleased, said to him: "Choose a boon."

Cakrika said:

41b-47. O highest Brahman, O highest abode, O highest soul, O you full of pity, I am actually seeing you. What is the use of other boons, O twice-born? I did not meditate upon your form. I did not worship you with offerings of eatables, divine flowers, divine incenses or lamps. I never recollected your names. O lord, I never held on my head the water (flowing) from your feet. I did not eat the offerings of eatables made to you, nor did I observe any vow (in honour) of you. Yet I (am able to) see you. What shall I do with other boons? I am born in a mountaineer's family and am excluded from all religious rites. Yet I have today secured your lotus-like feet difficult to be secured even by deities. What (then) is the use of other boons to me? Yet, O lord of Lakṣmī, when you desire to grant a boon, (then) let my heart remain on you; let it not sink from (want of) your favour.

The lord said:

48-49. I, a sinful servant, have got great satisfaction by this shower of nectar that you have offered, O large-hearted one. O dear, I am very much pleased with this excellent lotus that you offered me. Being delighted (i.e. gladly) I accept your devotion.

Vyāsa said:

50. Speaking like this, Viṣṇu who accepted devotion and who was full of pity, embraced the devotee with his four long arms.

The lord said:

51-52. O dear, O Cakrika, O best one, I am pleased with your devotion. O dear, whatever I have given will certainly come off.

The universal soul, the protector of the universe, the highest lord, having again embraced that great devotee, vanished there only.

53-54. That Cakrika, highly intent upon devotion for Viṣṇu was very much pleased, and abandoning his sons, wife etc. went to the city of Dvārakā. Having, due to the favour of Lakṣmī's lord, thus gone there, he, at the end of his life, attained liberation, difficult to be had even by gods.

55-56. Therefore, god is dependent upon his devotees. He is pleased merely by means of devotion, and not by means of hymns of praise, wealth, austerities or muttering (a deity's names). O best brāhmaṇa, though he gave (Viṣṇu) the fruit that had been defiled by him (by tasting), yet Viṣṇu, knowing his steady devotion, was pleased with him.

57-58. Therefore, in this world those who desire liberation, (should worship) god Viṣṇu. Those men, who worship with a firm devotion the pair of Viṣṇu's lotus-like feet, fit to be worshipped by great deities like Indra, go to (i.e. obtain) liberation.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Bhadratanu's Story

Jaimini said:

1. O preceptor, again tell me the greatness of Lakṣmī's lord. Who is satisfied after drinking the nectar of Viṣṇu's account?

Vyāsa said:

2-3. There is no one pious like you in the mundane existence, since you desire to listen to Viṣṇu's greatness with devotion. O best brāhmaṇa, the charming tale of Viṣṇu does purify

the three worlds—(it purifies) the listener, the questioner and the speaker.

4-6. O dear, listen to the greatness of Lakṣmī's lord, which destroys sins. I shall narrate it, giving the four goals of human life, in brief. Viṣṇu would instantly remove the sin, committed during crores of births, of him who would worship Viṣṇu very devoutly even one day. How can he be (called) pious who has not worshipped Viṣṇu? How can he be (called) a sinner who has devotion for lord Viṣṇu?

7-8. There is the best city called Puruṣottama, a city endowed with all qualities and resorted to by hosts of all gods. It is said to be the greatest of all holy places, since in that charming city Viṣṇu actually lives.

9-14. Formerly there lived a brāhmaṇa named Bhadratanu. He was handsome; he spoke pleasing words; and was born in a pure family. The handsome brāhmaṇa, on attaining youth, was deluded by passion of love; and giving up the fear of (not attaining) the other world, he was attached to a prostitute. He did not study the Vedas, nor did he at all study the Purāṇas. Due to the company of heretics he abandoned the excellent Gāyatrī hymn. That brāhmaṇa, highly attached to sins, accepted gifts not fit for sacrificial purposes, snatched others' wealth, and censured religion. He, the mean brāhmaṇa, abandoned the conduct of brāhmaṇas, so also devotion to truth, and also the worship of elderly persons (or preceptors) and guests. He did every act that was more and more sinful. O Jaimini, he never did the most meritorious act.

15. Once that brāhmaṇa who had committed sins and who was not ashamed and afraid of people, performed a śrāddha without faith in it.

16-25. Having gone to the prostitute's house at night he said to her:

The brāhmaṇa said:

O you of large buttocks, this is the day of the śrāddha to be offered to my manes. Yet, bound by your virtues I have come to your house. O dear one, see this night fearful to all people. The sky, (right) from the ground, has multitudes of clouds dropping water, and is covered. Even at this night, at which the way is

lost due to fresh clouds, I, with my mind attracted towards your qualities, have come (to you), with the lamp of lightning in the clouds and my longing directing me to the object. O dear one, I, with anxiety about and relying upon your qualities have come (to you) at night. Not seeing you even for a moment, I am not happy. O slender one, I have come to see you with difficulty. O dear, what have I to do with a bath with the water of a holy place? Sprinkled with the holy water of your love I have reached heaven. What fruit would I get by exerting for pleasure in the other world (i.e. heaven)? Due to your favour, O dear one, I get heaven even while alive. O dear one, I performed the śrāddha-rite at home for fear of bad name. I do not have the slightest faith in this śrāddha. O beautiful lady, you are my muttering of prayers, my penance, and my prudence. O beautiful lady, I have resorted to you only in this mundane existence with full devotion. I always belong to you. Order (me) what I (should) do.

Sumadhyamā said:

26-34. With you as his son, your father has become like one who is sonless. You desire to have coitus even on the day of the śrāddha (offered) to the manes. O wicked one, the manes of him who has coitus on the day of (the śrāddha offered to) his manes, and he also eat semen. If a fool, through folly, has coitus on the day of (the śrāddha offered to his) manes, the śrāddha is fit to be received by demons. There is no doubt about this. I have clearly told you. What would one not get if one's mind in accordance with that (i.e. what I have said) would be (set) on Viṣṇu? The life of living beings remains within (the control of) Yama's staff. Yet, O fool, you, being fearless are always commiting sin(s). O fool, life perishes in a moment like a water-bubble. Then thinking that it is eternal, why do you always commit (sinful acts) secretly? How does he, on whose head the couple of letters 'mṛ-tyu' (i.e. death) is written, commit a sin, giving pain to all? Oh! wonderful is great Viṣṇu's Māyā on the earth, since, O brāhmaṇa, a sinner is always delighted. The sacrifice performed in the stage of a householder, burning like fire (says:) "Give place to (your) sin in my body, difficult to be resorted to."

Vyāsa said:

35-40. Due to the sin impelled by destiny that good prosti-

tute spoke like this. The brāhmaṇa who had committed sins, thought in his mind. 'Fie upon me a great sinner, a fool, the greatest among sinners! I, a wicked one, do not have that knowledge which the prostitute has. I, having got birth in a pure brāhmaṇa family, have everyday committed great sin(s), destroying myself. How do I still commit sin(s) through indiscrimination, when death is certain, and Yama is my master after my death! When I have not muttered (the names of Viṣṇu), when I have not observed penance, so also when I have not performed a sacrifice, when I have not studied the Vedas, when I have not practised the conduct of a brāhmaṇa, when I have not honoured guests, when I have not been devoted to my preceptor, when I have not honoured brāhmaṇas, so also when I have not offered a śrāddha to my dead ancestors, so also when I have not offered worship to Lakṣmī's lord, how can I have an excellent position (after death)?'

41-43. That brāhmaṇa, having saluted like (i.e. prostrating himself like) a staff on the ground, the illustrious Mārkaṇḍeya, the best among the knowers of religious rules, praised him with (proper) words. "Salutation to you, O greatest brāhmaṇa. Salutation to you, O long-lived one. Salutation to you the illustrious one, of the form of Viṣṇu. Salutation to Mṛkaṇḍu's son, desiring the good of all people. Salutation to you, the ocean of knowledge. Salutation to you, the immutable one."

44. Thus praised by the brāhmaṇa, the great ascetic Mārkaṇḍeya, master of the significance of all holy texts, being very much delighted, spoke (thus):

Mārkaṇḍeya said:

45. O very blessed one, I am very much pleased by your devotion. Choose a boon. I shall instantly accomplish your desired object. (This will) not (be) otherwise.

The brāhmaṇa said:

46-48. I am the greatest of sinners. I am without (i.e. I do not follow) the practices of a brāhmaṇa. I am always connected with doing harm to others. I am always interested in others' wives. O best brāhmaṇa, I, a fool, always committed great sin(s). I have never done any pious act with regard to the other world.

How can I, a great sinner, cross the fearful ocean of the worldly existence which causes pain and which is very fierce?

Mārkaṇḍeya said:

49-51. O best brāhmaṇa, even if you have committed sins, you are the best among the pious, since (in you) has arisen this knowledge difficult to be found in the world. The liking for religious merit of the pious ones increases everyday. The liking for sins of the sinful ones (also) increases everyday. Though you are a sinner, you (can) keep off your thought for sins. Therefore, the lord indeed appears to be pleased with you.

52-53. They call the man to be the best, who having first committed a sin, turns away from it (afterwards), and who has worshipped Viṣṇu in his former existence(s). Lord Viṣṇu, the great one, seeing his devotee attached to sins, gives him broad understanding, so that he gets felicity.

54-55. Therefore, O best brāhmaṇa, you who have worshipped Viṣṇu in every existence, will soon have good fortune. There is no doubt. (But) O brāhmaṇa, since now it is time for me to perform my religious rites, you will not hear from me (the answers to) whatever you have asked me.

56-62. There is a brāhmaṇa named Dānta, who knows the truth of every object. He will tell you all that. Go to his hermitage.

Advised by that intelligent Mārkaṇḍeya, the brāhmaṇa quickly went to the pure and very beautiful hermitage of Dānta. It was adorned with trees like aśvattha, campaka, bakula and priyaka, so also other flowered trees and was very charming. The atmosphere was filled with the fragrance of full-blown flowers. It had swarms of humming bees. It was very much resounding with the sounds of (i.e. produced by) fruits. Breezes gently blew there. The water there was cold. It was crowded with hundreds of wild beasts, and with pupils and their pupils. That brāhmaṇa, having entered that very charming hermitage, saw Dānta who knew the true nature of Brahman and who was surrounded by the hosts of his pupils. That best brāhmaṇa, having praised that best brāhmaṇa, Dānta, of the nature of Viṣṇu, saluted his feet with (i.e. by bowing) his head.

Dānta said:

63. O good one, who are you that have come (here)? What is your intention (in coming over) here? Tell the truth. With what motive are you praising me now?

Bhadratanu said:

64-65. O distinguished one, I am a brāhmaṇa without (i.e. not following) the practices of a brāhmaṇa. I am known by the name Bhadratanu, and have committed all sins. O brāhmaṇa, since you know the true nature of Brahman, tell me this: How can I, a sinner, destroy the sins (I have committed) in the world?

Dānta said:

66-72. O brāhmaṇa, listen to a great secret. Through affection for you I tell it, by which the fetter of the worldly existence of men is cut off. Give up the company of heretics. Always resort to the company of the good. Give up lust, anger, delusion, greed, pride and jealousy. So also, O brāhmaṇa, carefully avoid falsehood and doing harm to others, while always recollecting the names of the magnanimous, great Viṣṇu. O best brāhmaṇa, in the same way clean and also besmear Viṣṇu's temple. Adorn the path leading to it, and put lamps in it. Always giving water (to the thirsty) and performing the five great sacrifices, serve the brāhmaṇas and your relatives. Listen to the tale of Viṣṇu. Mutter the formula of twelve syllables. O best one, you who will be doing all these acts, will have excellent knowledge, and due to knowledge you will obtain liberation.

The brāhmaṇa said:

73-76. O brāhmaṇa, explain these good (qualities) which you talked about. (Tell me:) What is *moha*, what are religious hypocrisy and jealousy? What is falsehood? What is (doing) harm (to others)? What is pity? What is tranquillity? And what is control? What is said to be impartiality? What is (said to be) the worship of Lakṣmī's lord? What is said to be the day and the night? What is recollection of Viṣṇu? What are the five great sacrifices? What is twelve-lettered formula? O best brāhmaṇa, give me the full explanation of these, so that through your favour I shall reach the highest place.

Dānta said:

77-86. Those who, giving up acts approved by the Vedas, do other acts, and who are without their own practices (i.e. who do not follow practices laid down for their own caste) are declared to be heretics. Those who follow their practices (i.e. practices laid down for their caste) approved by the Vedas, and who are without sins and greed are declared to be good people. O best brāhmaṇa, that constant longing for women and for obtaining wealth is said to be *kāma*, desire of sensual enjoyments. That torment which is produced in one's heart after hearing one's censure should be known as anger. It destroys all virtue. That desire which is produced in one's mind to take others' wealth on seeing it, is said to be greed, O best brāhmaṇa. The feeling of mineness as 'This is my mother, this is my father, this is my wife, this is my house', is said to be *moha* (attachment). The (feeling viz.) 'I am noble, I am rich, nobody is comparable to me on the earth,' which is produced in one's mind is called pride. 'People always censure me. Fie upon my life!' He who says like this to himself (has) contempt for himself. Such contempt is (called) *matsara*, self-condemnation. That which is the statement of facts and which delights all people should be known to be truth. The opposite of it is falsehood. Such a thought—when will his affluence, wife, sons perish?—which is produced in a man's heart is called *himsā*, harm.

87-95. That desire which is produced in the heart to remove the affliction of others even with an effort is said to be pity, O best brāhmaṇa. The satisfaction that is produced in the heart is called tranquillity. Taking away the heart from a censured act is declared by the wise to be self-control and is approved by those who see the truth. O best brāhmaṇa, that contentment which always prevails in misery or happiness, so also viewing an enemy or a friend as equal is called impartiality. O brāhmaṇa, that is said to be the worship of Viṣṇu, when reverence is paid to Viṣṇu with faith by means of offering of eatables, sandal, flowers etc. Abstinence from taking food observed during the day and at night on the first and the subsequent day is known as fast. O best one, the unification of oneself and of Viṣṇu is said to be the recollection of Viṣṇu. Teaching and reciting the Vedas (*brahmayajña*), reception of guests (*nṛyajña*), sacrifice to the superior

gods made by oblations to fire (*devayajña*), obsequial offerings (*pitṛyajña*), an oblation to all created beings (*bhūtayajña*), are said to be the five sacrifices. The wise call this—*namo bhagavate Vāsudevāya* (Salutation to the revered Vāsudeva) preceded by (the syllable) *Oṁ* to be a great formula of twelve syllables. O best brāhmaṇa, I have thus told you what was asked by you.

96-97a. Hearing it all men get excellent knowledge. O brāhmaṇa, therefore, having everyday recited the one hundred and eight names of the lord of Lakṣmī, you will obtain liberation which is difficult to be obtained.

Bhadratanu said:

97b. (Please) tell (me) the hundred and eight names of Viṣṇu, the lord of Lakṣmī.

Dānta said:

98-102. O brāhmaṇa, listen. Having drawn the essence of the thousand names of Viṣṇu, the highest soul, I shall tell you the mode of meditation, having meditated in which way the hundred and eight names destroy great sins. Having meditated upon the excellent face of Kṛṣṇa, which has the form of a hemp-flower, of Kṛṣṇa whose eyes are like full-blown lotuses, the entire body of whom (i.e. of the lord) is adorned with the dust from cows' feet, whose excellent head is adorned with the beautiful hair of a cow's tail, the lord who has put on his charming lips the beautiful sound of the flute (i.e. the sweet-sounding flute), who is surrounded by children living in cowpens, who has put on a yellow garment, whose face is like that of Cupid, one should repeat the hundred and eight names of Viṣṇu.

103-117. (He should repeat it in the following way:) 'Oṁ, salutation to him. Of the hundred and eight names of Kṛṣṇa, the seer is Veda Vyāsa. The metre is anuṣṭup. The deity is Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Application is to the muttering: Salutation. Kṛṣṇa, Keśava, Keśi's enemy, Sanātana (ancient), Kaṁsāri (Kaṁsa's enemy), Dhenukāri (Dhenuka's enemy), Śiśupāla-ripu (Śiśupāla's enemy) Prabhu (the lord), Devakīnandana (Devakī's son), Śauri, Puṇḍarīkanibhekṣaṇa (having lotus-like eyes), Dāmodara, Jagannātha, Jagatkartā (creator of the world), Jaganmaya (full of the world), Nārāyaṇa, Balidhvaṁsī (destroyer of Bali), Vāmana, Ditinandana

(Diti's son), Viṣṇu, Yadukulaśreṣṭha (the best in Yadu's family), Vāsudeva (son of Vasudeva), Vasuprada (giver of wealth), Ananta, Kaiṭabhāri (enemy of Kaiṭabha), Mallajit (conqueror of Malla), Narakāntaka (destroyer of Naraka), Acyuta, Śrīdhara, Śrīmat (possessing abundance), Śrīpati (Lakṣmī's lord), Puruṣottama (the highest Brahman). Govinda, Vanamālin (who wore a garland of wood-flowers), Hṛṣīkeśa, Akhilārtihā (who removes all afflictions), Nṛsiṁha, Daityaśatru (enemy of demons), Matsyadeva (the Fish-god), Jaganmaya (full of the world), Bhūmidhārin (sustainer of the earth), Mahākūrma (the great tortoise), Varāha, Pṛthivīpati (lord of the earth), Vaikuṇṭha, Pītavāsas (who wears a yellow garment), Cakrapāṇi (who has a disc in his hand), Gadādhara (who holds a mace), Śaṁkhabhṛt (who holds a conch), Padmapāṇi (who has a lotus in his hand), Nandakin (who holds the Nandaka sword), Garuḍadhvaja (the eagle-bannered god), Caturbhuja (having four arms), Mahāsattva (very powerful), Mahābuddhi (very intelligent), Mahābhuja (having large arms), Mahotsava (very joyful), Mahātejas (very lustrous), Mahābāhupriya (liking the large-armed i.e. mighty ones), Prabhu (the lord), Viṣvaksena (Aniruddha), Śārṅgin (having the Śārṅga bow), Padmanābha, Janārdana, Tulasī-vallabha (lover of Tulasī), Apara (unlimited), Pareśa (the highest lord), Parameśvara (the highest god), Paramakleśahārin (remover of great affliction), Paratrasukhada (giving happiness in the next world), Para (the highest one), Hṛdayastha (remaining in the heart), Ambarastha (remaining in the sky), Mohada (causing delusion), Mohanāśana (destroying delusion), Samastapātaka-dhvaṁsin (destroying all sins), Mahābalabalāntaka (destroyer of the power of the very mighty ones), Rukmiṇīramaṇa (Rukmiṇī's husband), Rukmipratijñākhaṇḍana (who broke Rukmi's pledge), Mahat (the great one), Dāmabaddha (who was tied with a rope), Kleśahārin (who removes affliction), Govaradhanadhara (who held up the Govardhana mountain), Hari, Pūtanāri (Putanā's enemy), Muṣṭikāri (Muṣṭika's enemy) Yamalārjunabhañjana (who broke the twin Arjuna trees), Upendra, Viśvamūrti (of a universal form), Vyomapāda (having his foot in the sky), Sanātana (the eternal one), Paramātman (the highest soul), Parabrahman (the highest brahman), Praṇatārtivināśana (destroying the affliction of those

that bow to him), Trivikrama (having three strides), Mahāmāya (having great divine power), Yogavid (knowing the Yoga), Vistaraśravas (far-famed), Śrīnidhi (treasure of wealth), Śrīnivāsa (abode of glory), Yajñabhoktṛ (enjoyer of sacrifices), Sukhaprada (giving happiness), Yajñeśvara (lord of sacrifices), Rāvaṇāri (Rāvaṇa's enemy), Pralambaghna (killer of Pralamba), Akṣaya (inexhaustible), Avyaya (immutable).

118-120. O best brāhmaṇa, I have told you these one hundred and eight names (of Viṣṇu) (selected) from his thousand names, for pleasing Viṣṇu. All of them destroy sins. They destroy (the effect of) bad dreams. They destroy the trouble due to Planets. They destroy all diseases. They give great affluence also. They destroy all harms. They give the fruits of all acts.

121-125. With him who, three times everyday, would repeat these hundred and eight names before Viṣṇu, Viṣṇu is always pleased. The dead ancestors of him, the devotee of Viṣṇu, who would devoutly recite these hundred and eight names at the time of a srāddha, are pleased, and go to the highest position. He who would recite them at the time of a sacrifice, at the worship of a deity, at the time of giving (gifts), during a pilgrimage, would (also) obtain that fruit. By repeating this hymn, one who has no son gets a son, one longing for wealth gets wealth, one desiring knowledge gets it. Never any evil befalls them on the earth who devoutly recite these hundred and eight names of Viṣṇu.

Dānta said:

126-131. O brāhmaṇa, go. Well-being to you. Having very devoutly propitiated Viṣṇu in the manner as told by me, you will obtain the highest happiness.

Thus advised by Dānta, the knower of Brahman, he was engaged in worshipping Viṣṇu in that excellent holy place. O Jaimini, that brāhmaṇa devoutly worshipped Viṣṇu in the manner as told by Dānta everyday for five days. Knowing his very firm devotion, Viṣṇu, full of compassion, and lustrous like a crore of suns, appeared before him. Seeing that lord of the worlds, Acyuta, dear to Lakṣmī, the brāhmaṇa saluted his pair of feet by (bowing) his head. Then the greatest brāhmaṇa, with his mind full of joy, praised Lakṣmī's lord by joining the palms of his hands.

132-134. "O Viṣṇu, you have taken my intellect disposed to sins to your kind devotion giving auspicious objects. Therefore, I, a rustic, who has done abundant sins, have been today made a (gentle) man. O highest lord, I have known this much only: When you whose pair of feet is saluted by the three worlds, are angry, then man's intellect goes towards a sin. And when you are pleased, the same goes to good acts. O lord, I tell you about the efficacy of remembering you, due to which I who have committed all sins, went, after getting into an aeroplane covered with pure gold, to the highest place.

135-136. The hunter Kanika, who was rich in virtues, (but) who had committed sins, knows (the efficacy) of the water (flowing) from your lotus-like feet. O you, the only lord of the world, king Yajñadhvaja, honoured by gods, knows the fruit of smearing the abode of you, the lord, O Mura's enemy, O you the cause of the creation, the maintenance and the destruction of the world. Yajñamālin, his brother Sumālin who is afraid of sins (also) know it, O you having on your banner (Garuḍa) the enemy of serpents.

137-140. Dharma alone, and none else in the three worlds, knows that fruit which would be (obtained) by going round you, Viṣṇu. O lord, on the earth who is able to describe your heart and your kindness? A hunter, having pierced you with arrows, went to the highest place. O lord of the world, even after censuring you Śiśupāla obtained liberation. (Then) what to say about your devotee? May my mind delight in you who, in the form of Brahmā, created this world, O great Viṣṇu.

141-153. O Viṣṇu, the entire destruction of the world is done by you in the form of Rudra in this mundane existence. Salutation to you who are that. Salutation to you, than whom the world is neither smaller nor larger, and who has occupied the entire world. Salutation to you, from the eyes of which god the Sun that causes the day is produced; and from whose mouth fire is produced. O best god, O Keśava, I always salute you, from whose ear airs and vital airs also have sprung up. Salutation to you, (embracing) the chest of whom, of a dark body, Lakṣmī was very happy as the lightning is (after resorting to the body) of a cloud. Salutation to you, the limit of whose greatness even gods like Brahmā have not been able to reach. Salutation to you who

would be born in every yuga for establishing righteousness and destroying sinners. Salutation to you who, the noble one, has deluded this world, and due to whose delusion Śiva destroys it. Salutation to you who are pleased by means of devotion alone, and not by means of wealth, eulogies, gifts and austerities. Salutation to you who bring about the welfare of and who favour cows, brāhmaṇas and the good. Salutation to you, the god, who remove the affliction of the helpless, the kinsmen, and the meditating saints. Salutation to you who behave equally with all men, gods and elephants. Salutation to you, on whose being pleased even a mountain suddenly becomes (soft) like grass, and on whose being angry grass becomes (hard) like a mountain.

154-156. May I have my (mind) on you (i.e. may I think of you), as the meritorious ones have theirs on religious merit, as the father has his (mind) on his son, or as the chaste ladies have theirs on their husband. May I have my (mind) on you (i.e. may I think of you) as that of the hungry on food. May I have my (mind) on you (i.e. may I think of you) as those that are tormented by heat have theirs on the moon, as those that are afflicted by cold have theirs on the sun, or as those oppressed by thirst have theirs on water.

157-186. May the sin of cohabiting with my preceptor's wife, which I, who am seeing you, committed, perish. May the sin of the murder of those who did not merit it, who was deluded by (your) Māyā and who am seeing you, committed by me perish. O highest lord, I drank (liquor etc.) that is prohibited. May that sin of me who am seeing you (perish). May the sin which I who am seeing you, committed (when) I emitted my semen in water or in a vulva (perish). May the sin which I who am seeing you, committed, when I, sprinkling (i.e. dropping) my semen on the earth, caused an abortion, perish. May the sin which I who am seeing you, committed, by unintentionally deceiving (others), perish. May the sin which I who am seeing you, committed when I told lies every moment (perish). May the sin which I who am seeing you, committed when I censured the good and always harmed others (perish). May the sin which I who am seeing you, committed (when) I kept phlegm in my mouth (perish). May the sin which I who am seeing you, committed, (when) I cut off a tree which had some life in it, perish. May the sin which I who

am seeing you, committed, (when) I urinated or evacuated feces on a path, in a temple of a deity or in a cowpen, perish. May the sin which I who am seeing you, committed, (when) I had no devotion to my father and mother, perish. May the sin which I who am seeing you, committed (when) I stopped (a person) going for a bath or for a meal, perish. O best god, may the sin which I who am seeing you, committed, (when) I took a meal on the Ekādaśī-day (perish). O lord, I did not honour a guest coming to my house. May that sin of me who am seeing you, perish. May that sin which I who am seeing you, committed, (when) I twice took meals on Dvādaśī (the twelfth day) and Daśamī (the tenth day of a month), perish. May the sin which I who am seeing you, committed, (when) I stopped cows running to drink (water), perish. May the sin which I who am seeing you, committed, (when) I gave up a vow without completing it, perish. May the sin which I who am seeing you, committed, (when) I gave a false testimony due to my love for my friends, perish. May the sin which I who am seeing you, committed, (when) I did not approach my wife during the time favourable for conception, perish. May the sin which I who am seeing you committed, (when) I took meals in an unhallowed house, perish. May the sin which I who am seeing you committed, (when) I followed the livelihood of a beggar, perish, O Nṛhari. May the sin which I who am seeing you committed, (when) O lord, I showed ascendancy when I was being punished by the king, perish. May the sin which I who am seeing you committed, (when) I put up an obstacle in the (narration of) the tales from the Purāṇas, perish. May that sin which I who am seeing you committed, (when) I listened to the account of the consequences of acts done by others, perish. May that sin which I who am seeing you committed, (when) I cut off the holy fig tree and the dhātrī tree, perish. May that sin which I committed, (when) I sold curd, milk and ghee, perish. May that sin which I committed, (when) I gave hope to others, and made it fruitless (i.e. disappointed them), perish. May that sin which I committed, when I cast an angry glance at brāhmaṇas and mendicants, perish. May that sin which I committed, (when) through anger I reproached those who gave me means of livelihood, perish.

187-189. What is the use of speaking much in this regard?

The sins of me who am seeing you, have perished. There is no doubt that I am fortunate, I am fortunate, I am fortunate. O Lord of the world, salutation to you, salutation to you, salutation to you." O Jaimini, having spoken like this, that brāhmaṇa, with his body horripilated due to devotion, fell at the charming pair of the feet of Viṣṇu.

The lord said:

190. Rise, get up, O brāhmaṇa, I am pleased with you by your devotion. Tell me what is desired by you. I shall certainly give it to you.

Bhadratanu said:

191-193. O highest lord, O Govinda, O kind one, O greatest one, O Acyuta, who will get on the earth what I have received now? Yet, O enemy of Mura, I ask for one boon from you. O lord, may I have firm devotion to you in every existence. You, being pleased, will give everything desired by that man who would devoutly recite this hymn composed by me.

The lord said:

194-195. O brāhmaṇa, the boon is given to you. There is no doubt about it. Yet, O wise one, I desire to form friendship with you. I do not deserve to have a servant (like you), since you are just like (i.e. equal to) me. Therefore, I have now displayed this friendship with you.

Vyāsa said:

196-201. O Jaimini, then that kind god Viṣṇu, loving his devotees, formed friendship with the pious one. Viṣṇu gladly gave him the garland put round his own neck. The brāhmaṇa also devoutly gave Viṣṇu a garland of tulasī (-leaves). Having spread out his four hands, Viṣṇu embraced him. The brāhmaṇa also joyfully embraced lord Viṣṇu. Having thus formed friendship with that brāhmaṇa, kind Viṣṇu, accepting devotion, vanished there only. Then Viṣṇu everyday played with the brāhmaṇa with a ball in that holy place (called) Puruṣottama. O brāhmaṇa sage, once, seeing the brāhmaṇa (to be) weak, Viṣṇu, full of pity, said (these) words to the brāhmaṇa with affection:

The lord said:

202. O friend, how have you become weak? Who snatched away your wealth? What is the anxiety in your mind? Friend, please tell it.

Bhadratanu said:

203. O lord of the world, to please you I practise penance everyday. Due to that, O lord, my body has become weak.

The lord said:

204-209. I am not so much pleased with anyone else as I am pleased with you. (Then) O best brāhmaṇa, why do you trouble your body again? Seeing you weak, anxiety is produced in my heart. Therefore, O best brāhmaṇa, give up this trouble to your body.

The brāhmaṇa was adorned by the lord of gods with his own upper garments, with his own garments and ornaments, with very charming golden rings, and with bracelets shining round his own hands. Lord Kṛṣṇa took the crown from his own forehead, the pair of anklets from his own feet, a golden necklace from his own neck, and gave them to the best brāhmaṇa. The pious brāhmaṇa, adorned with those ornaments given by Śrī Hari, and knowing the game with a ball would always play with Kṛṣṇa charming like a black lotus. Once Dānta saw him who had adorned his body with ornaments, whose pair of lips was bright due to the redness of tāmbūla, who had put on a divine garment and a very beautiful upper garment and who had a smiling face.

Dānta said:

210-219. O good Bhadratanu, you still do not give up sinful notions. All people, even after seeing your act, condemn it. Since I made you my disciple, all the ornaments are mine. An egotist, one of a bad character, a cruel one, one addicted to sins, one who destroys the teacher's fame, are five defiled disciples. So also, one having no faith, one who is garrulous, one of a fickle mind, one who censures the preceptor behind his back—these are said to be mean disciples. The wise ones should make a disciple after ascertaining his excellent character, since knowledge going to the wicked always causes pain to the preceptor also. Those sciences which are declared by the philosophers to bring fame, instantly

destroy the tree of the teacher's fame, when they are taught to the wicked. The sinful ones never like pious deeds, as the flies do not like fragrant sandal. As donkeys are not gratified by eating sweet meats, in the same way the wicked are not gratified by pious thoughts. Lakṣmī and piety, giving all desired objects, would never resort to a wicked one for fear of infamy. Or if they resort to him, they perish. And by chance he obtains, through (good) luck, highest knowledge; (if) he obtains it, (good) fortune leaves him.

Bhadratanu said:

220-221. O brāhmaṇa sage, you are speaking the truth. I am not proficient in the holy texts. You will never have infamy due to me (as) your disciple. O best brāhmaṇa, since, through your favour, I accomplished all my desired objects, you alone are difficult to be secured on the earth.

Dānta said:

222. O brāhmaṇa, tell (me) which desired object you accomplished. How did you terminate your penance just in a short time?

Bhadratanu said:

223-227. O preceptor, I gave up my daily rites etc. by the order of Viṣṇu whom I was able to see with little trouble. O best brāhmaṇa, Viṣṇu was so much pleased with me that he gave me his upper garment, (another) garment, two golden pitchers, the bracelet(s) (worn) round his hand(s), the crown on his forehead, the anklet(s) from his feet, and his own necklace. He who removes the affliction of his servants, has formed friendship with me. O preceptor, I constantly play with him the game with a ball. Though I do not go after (your) having heard these words of me, yet I have told with conviction in your presence.

Dānta said:

228-231. Lord Viṣṇu did not appear before me though I have propitiated him for seven thousand years with great devotion. Oh, having worshipped Viṣṇu only for five days, O best one

you had his audience, difficult to be obtained even by gods. You are blessed; you are fortunate. You are (i.e. should be) called actually a god, since the lord affectionately formed friendship with you. O best brāhmaṇa, when you have affection for me, (then) tell me, O brāhmaṇa, how seeing Viṣṇu is difficult for me.

Vyāsa said:

232-233. Thus addressed by his preceptor, the wise, amazed brāhmaṇa, highly devoted to Viṣṇu, went to his own hermitage. Then the next day he went (to Viṣṇu) and played (with him) with a ball. And full of politeness, he said these words to the kind lord of the world:

Bhadratanu said:

234-235. O lord of gods, O kind one, O lord of Lakṣmī, my preceptor desires to see you. Tell me who am here, what your order is. O you having lotus-like eyes, the brāhmaṇa is extremely devoted to you. Therefore, O best god, please appear before him.

The lord said:

236-238. O best brāhmaṇa, you worshipped me with great devotion during many births. Therefore, now I appeared before you. That wise brāhmaṇa, having worshipped me, (should) desire to see me, invisible even to deities, after a few days. He too is my great devotee. He is very much interested in worshipping me. Therefore, O brāhmaṇa, he will sometime have my audience.

Vyāsa said:

239. Having heard these words the brāhmaṇa again devoutly spoke to Viṣṇu, the destroyer of afflictions:

Bhadratanu said:

240-241. O lord of the world, O you who love your devotees, if you favour me, then appear before him in my presence. O god, my preceptor has asked for your audience as his fee. (Therefore,) O lord, having granted him audience, protect me.

The lord said:

242-245. When you laid out as his fee my audience, then bring your preceptor and make him see me.

Thus ordered by him, Bhadratanu went to the excellent hermitage of his preceptor. The preceptor came joyfully. When that brāhmaṇa Dānta, the best among donors, came (there) Viṣṇu showed himself endowed with all (good) marks to him. Then that brāhmaṇa, Viṣṇu's devotee, with his eyes full of tears of joy, joined the palms of his hands, and praised him.

Dānta said:

246-249. O kind one, O lord of Kamalā, O you who protect those who seek your shelter, salutation to you, salutation to you, salutation to you. Today my existence is fruitful; today my penance is fruitful; today everything of me is fruitful, (since) I saw you. O lord of Lakṣmī, O master, I have put before you, deep like crores of oceans, those words which I have thought out before. There is no eulogy of the lord of speech, the master of the world, which will produce love for you in my mind. O lord, protect me, protect me; be pleased, O lord of the world. Choose me even as the servant of the servant of the servant of you.

Vyāsa said:

250. O Jaimini, then that lord of gods, who accepted devotion and who was full of pity, laughed, put his lotus-like hand on his head, and spoke thus:

The lord said:

251. O best brāhmaṇa, you are my devotee. You have seen me. You will have all welfare due to my favour.

Vyāsa said:

252-257. O brāhmaṇa, having affectionately embraced Dānta and Bhadratanu, the greatest god suddenly disappeared just there. In that excellent holy place Puruṣottama, difficult to reach, Dānta, having seen Viṣṇu by means of *kriyāyoga* (employ-

ment of rituals), went to the highest place. That brāhmaṇa Bhadratanu very much interested in devotion to Viṣṇu also obtained at the end of his life liberation, difficult to be obtained even by gods. The sin committed during many existences by him who would devoutly worship the highest lord even for a day, (perishes. His) love for Viṣṇu increases. Even today all gods like Brahmā do not know the power of Viṣṇu's devotee on the earth, O Jaimini. O brāhmaṇa, this land of religious rites (i.e. Bhāratavarṣa), where having worshipped Viṣṇu men would be honoured by gods, is more difficult than heaven to be secured.

258-263. O best brāhmaṇa, all gods like Indra, afraid of losing their great religious merit, constantly say to one another: "When shall we just again go to the land of religious rites? When shall we worship there the lord of Lakṣmī? These people are very fortunate and are greater even than we, (since) they worship lord Viṣṇu in Bhāratavarṣa, difficult to be reached. Oh, who can describe the merits of Bhāratavarṣa where having formerly worshipped Viṣṇu we have attained godhead?" O best brāhmaṇa, in this way all hosts of gods like Indra always praise the Bhārata region, giving happiness. In this mundane existence no one like him who, after getting a birth there, has not worshipped Viṣṇu, is either seen or heard of.

264-265. I am telling the truth. I am again telling the truth only. Those men who, without being tired, and with firm devotion, even once worship the lord of the universe in this land of religious rites, are freed from sins easily committed, and quickly reach beatitude.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Greatness of Puruṣottama

Jaimini said:

1. O preceptor, if you favour me, then tell me about the greatness of Puruṣottama which you said to be the greatest holy place.

Vyāsa said:

2-6. O brāhmaṇa, listen to the greatness of Puruṣottama (told by me) in brief. Who else but Viṣṇu is able to tell it in the world? O best brāhmaṇa, the city called Puruṣottama is (situated) on the shore of the Lavaṇa sea (the Salt-sea), and it is more difficult to be reached than even heaven. Since Śrī Puruṣottama (i.e. Viṣṇu) lives in that city, therefore those who are conversant with the name have called it Puruṣottama. O brāhmaṇa, that rare holy place is ten yojanas (in area) on all sides. The men living there are seen to have four arms by gods. While entering the holy place, all would have the form of Viṣṇu. Therefore, the wise should raise no doubt about it.

7-9. O best brāhmaṇa, since Viṣṇu is a cāṇḍāla there, the food of (i.e. offered by) cāṇḍālas should be accepted by brāhmaṇas (at that holy place). There Lakṣmī cooks the food, and Viṣṇu himself eats (it). Therefore, O brāhmaṇa, the boiled rice there is difficult to be had even by deities. For those men who eat the pure food left over after it is eaten by Viṣṇu, salvation is not difficult to be had.

10-11. All gods like Brahmā everyday come (there) and eat that food which is very difficult to be had. Then what can be said about human beings? All great sages call him the hater of Viṣṇu, whose mind does not take delight in that food which is very difficult to be had.

12-19. O brāhmaṇa, as the water of Gaṅgā is pure everywhere, in the same way that food, destroying sins, is pure everywhere. O best brāhmaṇa, though that food is delicate, divine, and of the size of a partridge's belly, it is capable of removing sins. The sins committed formerly of (i.e. by) him whose devotion proceeds to that food, very difficult to obtain, perish. O best brāhmaṇa, he whose religious merit earned in many existences perishes, does not develop devotion for that food. Those mortals, full of devotion, who bathe in the lake of Indradyumna, in the large and deep pool of Mārkaṇḍeya, in Rohiṇī, in the sea, so also in the water of Śvetagaṅgā, are not reborn on this earth. O brāhmaṇa, the dead ancestors gratified with the water of the Salt-sea, are free from all afflictions, and go to Viṣṇu's abode. The wise ones have declared this sea to be the king of holy places. Therefore, every act done there would be inexhaustible.

20-25. There is no doubt that whatever act—honouring dead ancestors, giving gifts, worshipping the feet of the lord, muttering prayers, or any other act which a man performs in that charming holy place Viṣṇu would be fully inexhaustible. Those men who see (the idols of) Balabhadra, Subhadrā, and lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, have nothing that is difficult to be got. A man, even performing hundreds of acts of religious merit, does not get liberation without seeing (the idols of) Śrī Jagannātha, Subhadrā and Bala(rāma). O best brāhmaṇa, all gods like Indra salute him whose body has become red due to stroke(s) of cane there. O brāhmaṇa, all hosts of gods like Indra, remaining in the atmosphere and moving in aeroplanes, and being very delighted speak like this to one another:

26-28. 'When will Lakṣmī's lord give us the existence of a man? Then like a man we shall go to see lord Viṣṇu. When will our bodies be red due to the stroke(s) of cane in that holy place Śrī Puruṣottama?' O best brāhmaṇa, all gods like Indra always long for the stroke(s) of cane in that holy place, granting boons.

29-32. Those men who see there the Akṣaya Vaṭa (the inexhaustible fig-tree) with devotion, are freed from sins committed during crores of existences, and go to the highest position. The liberation of those who see (the idols of) Subhadrā, Balabhadra, Jagannātha, Anāmaya (i.e. Kṛṣṇa), the white Mādhava —the lord of gods, so also the deep and large pool of Mārkaṇḍeya, Jyāmeśvara, Hanūmat, the Akṣaya Vaṭa with devotion, is eternal. Listen to the religious merit of those men who there see Govinda rocked to and fro in a swing in the month of Phālguna.

33-38. Freed from all sins they go to Viṣṇu's abode in the end. Having obtained knowledge there only, they attain beatitude, very difficult to be secured. O Jaimini, he who sees Jagannātha in the west in the month of Caitra, would enter Viṣṇu's body after he is dead. That man who would see the lord of the world on the Ekādaśī of the bright half of Caitra, so also on the Tṛtīyā, is surely liberated. O brāhmaṇa sage, all the desires of that man who would enter (the place of) the great bath of the lord of the world, are fulfilled, in the sky. All gods like Brahmā, remain in the sky, and full of devotion, observe the great bath of the lord of the world. O brāhmaṇa sage, a mortal on seeing (the

idol of) Viṣṇu, the lord of the world, on the great full-moon day, obtains that highest position of Viṣṇu.

39-41. There is no doubt that he who would see (the idols of) Lakṣmī's lord and Balabhadra going to the Guṇḍikā-maṇḍapa (the pavilion called Guṇḍikā) in Āṣāḍha, is liberated. He who sees (the idol of) the lotus-eyed lord of the world seated in a chariot, does not get rebirth in the mundane existence, giving every (kind of) affliction. The lord cuts off the painful bond of the worldly existence of those men who devoutly see (the idol of) Subhadrā mounted on a chariot.

42. O brāhmaṇa, that woman who is sonless, or whose son is dead and who sees (the idol of) Subhadrā, has many children, and her children live (long).

43-55. An unfortunate lady (deserted by her husband) that has but one child would indeed become fortunate in the matter of her lord and would have many children. That man who sees (the idol of) Kṛṣṇa that is in the Guṇḍikā-maṇḍapa, so also (those of) Balabhadra and Subhadrā, goes to the highest position. O Jaimini, a sick person or an unhappy person who would see (the idol of) Viṣṇu in the Guṇḍikā-maṇḍapa, is instantly free from the disease or the affliction. O best brāhmaṇa, he who, being sonless, would see (the idol of) Viṣṇu that is in the Guṇḍikā-maṇḍapa, would obtain a son who is Viṣṇu's devotee. One desiring knowledge gets it. One longing for wealth obtains it. One wanting a wife gets her. One desiring liberation would get it. O brāhmaṇa, that king who is deprived of his kingdom and who sees with devotion (the idol of) Viṣṇu in the Guṇḍikā-maṇḍapa gets it (back). The enemies of him who, troubled by his enemies, devoutly sees (the idol of) Viṣṇu in the Guṇḍikā-maṇḍapa, perish, O brāhmaṇa sage. He who, very much harrassed by the king, sees (the idol of) Viṣṇu in the Guṇḍikā-maṇḍapa, would instantly bring the king under his control. Of all pilgrimages the one to Guṇḍikā is said to be the best. Therefore, even by abandoning hundreds of other activities, men should undertake it. That man who in that charming holy city sees Viṣṇu at the time of going to bed or getting up, is honoured even by gods. On the earth who can describe the importance of Puruṣottama, by entering which (holy place) a man would become Viṣṇu? What is the use of prolixity? I tell in brief: Of all holy

places Puruṣottama is the best. He who desires to cross this ocean of worldly existence, which is very deep, which causes pain, which is the resort of dangerous hosts of sins, should see Viṣṇu, the best of gods, in the holy place called Puruṣottama, giving all pleasure.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

What Pleases Viṣṇu; What Makes Him Angry?

Vyāsa said:

1-2. O best brāhmaṇa, those men who, full of devotion, resort to Viṣṇu, never face a disaster. I will once more narrate the greatness of Lakṣmī's lord, hearing which all men obtain the highest position.

3-4. Devotees of Viṣṇu are satisfied with listening to the greatness of Kṛṣṇa. Heretics, suffering from trouble in a hell, are not satisfied. O best brāhmaṇa, the excellent greatness of Viṣṇu should not be narrated in the presence of heretics. It should be told in the presence of Viṣṇu's devotees.

5-9. O Jaimini, formerly in Tretā yuga there lived a brāhmaṇa, Urvīśu by name. He was always engaged in sinful acts, and was highly given to the censure of religion. He snatched brāhmaṇas' wealth. O best brāhmaṇa, he was always bent upon cohabitation with another's wife. He ate cow's flesh. He drank liquor. He had an ardent longing for the amorous gestures of prostitutes. He harmed him who sought his shelter. He always censured others. He was a traitor. He harmed his friends. He harassed his kinsmen also. He told lies. He was cruel. He used to have the company of heretics. He cut off the livehood of brāhmaṇas. He took away deposits. Seeing him cruel and highly attached to sins like that all his kinsmen who were angry came to his house.

The kinsmen said:

10-14. O fool, the eminence which our ancestors had earned in our pure family is (now) being destroyed by you. Giving up the righteous path, you are always committing sin(s). You are

born as the destroyer of the fame of our family and as one giving pain to your kinsmen. In you (i.e. with regard to you) the Creator's creation is thought to be causing wonder. Poison came up from that sea from which the moon had come up. Oh, it is not possible to measure the power of bad sons. In a moment they destroy the fame gathered by many men (i.e. their ancestors). Even a low family becomes the greatest when the best son is born (in it). But even the best family is degraded when a mean son is born in it.

Vyāsa said:

15-20. O brāhmaṇa, speaking like this all the kinsmen, getting angry due to the fear of infamy, deserted that greatest sinner. He, deserted by all his kinsmen and reproached by all people, was sorry, and deprived of all his affluence, became a bandit. All (the members of) the community seized him who did that act of a robber, cruel and harmful to others, and reported him to the king. O best brāhmaṇa, the king, due to affection for his father, did not kill him, (but) expelled him from his country. Then the cruel one, resorting to a forest along with many (other) haughty bandits, remained (there) for snatching the wealth of travellers. O Jaimini, he, fatigued while roaming in the forest, sometime went, along with (other) bandits, for a bath to a river-bank.

21-22. This wicked one saw in that river many blessed brāhmaṇas highly devoted to the lord's worship. Then all the brāhmaṇas, having worshipped Viṣṇu, spoke to one another with great curiosity:

23-29a. "I have today dropped those campaka-flowers (in honour of Viṣṇu)." Someone (else) said: "I have offered tāmbūla to Viṣṇu. In my life I shall never eat a tāmbūla. Today I have offered the best banana to Viṣṇu. Birth after birth I would eat a banana." Someone said: "I have offered a pomegranate to Viṣṇu." Someone said: "I have offered an excellent mango (to Viṣṇu)." Having heard these words of them talking to one another, Urviśu thought, 'What shall I offer to Viṣṇu? I cannot give all those things that are eatables in the worldly existence to Viṣṇu. (Then) What shall I offer to him? I, a thief, overcome by the fear of the king, always stay in the forest. I am never entitled to getting into a cart.'

Vyāsa said:

29b-33. O best brāhmaṇa, the thief, repeatedly speaking like this, gave a cart to Viṣṇu, the giver of the four goals (of human life). Then all the brāhmaṇas went as they had come. That thief also went to his abode along with (other) thieves. Once a traveller carrying a basket of jaggery came to that region of the impudent (thieves) along the same path. Then this fearless bandit, harming others, snatched that basket of jaggery of the traveller. Then the robbers broke the basket of jaggery.

34-36. As his share Urvīśu obtained a cart fashioned from jaggery. O best brāhmaṇa, Urvīśu, having obtained that jaggery-cart thought in his mind recollecting the words (of those brāhmaṇas): 'Formerly I myself have presented a cart to Viṣṇu. Therefore, in this existence, I should not take a cart.' Thinking like this in his mind he intended to give the cart (to a brāhmaṇa).

37-42. To please Viṣṇu he gave it to some brāhmaṇa. O brāhmaṇa, knowing that devotion of that great sinner, Viṣṇu who was pleased, instantly removed all his sin. O brāhmaṇa, on the same day all the angry citizens entered that great forest and killed that Urvīśu. To take him (to his own abode) the lord sent an aeroplane made of gold, so also messengers adorned with various ornaments. Then those messengers of the lord, having put that Urvīśu who was dead, into the aeroplane, instantly went to Viṣṇu's city. Then the best one among the pious obtained Viṣṇu's proximity. After living near Viṣṇu for a hundred periods of Manu, and after securing the highest knowledge, he entered Viṣṇu's body.

Vyāsa said:

43-44. A man who, somehow or the other, is devoted to Viṣṇu, goes, like a royal swan beyond the ocean of the worldly existence. He in whose heart there is devotion for Viṣṇu even for a moment, goes to the highest position. Even though he is a sinner, he goes (to the highest position).

45. One should, after offering even the best thing to Viṣṇu, afterwards enjoy it for the appeasement of the sin.

46. The thing that is offered to Viṣṇu should be given to a brāhmaṇa. The wise should not enjoy any remnant of it themselves.

47. O best brāhmaṇa, a devotee of Viṣṇu should not enjoy whatever things and sweets without offering them to Viṣṇu.

48-51. I shall again tell, along with its history, the greatness of eatables offered to Viṣṇu, which destroy all sins. O brāhmaṇa, being attentive, listen to it. There was a brāhmaṇa, Sarvajani by name, who was born in a pure family. He was calm, controlled, kind and honoured his preceptors (or elderly persons) and brāhmaṇas. He was absorbed in Viṣṇu's worship, and was exclusively devoted to remembering Viṣṇu. He removed the affliction of those who sought his shelter; he was truthful, and had curbed his senses. He (everyday) bathed in the morning. He followed the practices of his own (caste); he abandodned harm (to others); he was absorbed in (observing) the Ekādaśī vow; he was intent upon honouring his kinsmen.

52-54. Once that best brāhmaṇa saw in his dream lord Viṣṇu who was dark, whose eyes were like dustless lotuses, who had a smiling face, who had put on a yellow garment, whose body was bright due to golden ear-rings and anklets and a crown, whose chest shone with the Kaustubha (gem), who was adorned with a garland of wood-flowers. He had four arms, had held a conch, a disc, a mace and a lotus, was endowed with all (auspicious) marks, and had worn a golden sacred thread.

55. Having seen the lord of the world in the dream, the brāhmaṇa joined the palms of his hands, and with his body horripilated, gladly praised him.

56-64. "I salute you, (i.e.) Viṣṇu, who are the lord of the entire world, who destroy the grief, fear and diseases of good people, who are dear to Lakṣmī's heart, who give the nectar of piety, material welfare, and sensual enjoyment. O Murāri, I, being arrogant through folly committed all sins. I am, therefore, frightened. Giving the boat of your devotion, take me out of this deep ocean of (the existence in) the world. O Viṣṇu, though I know that a man quickly obtains sin and delusion on the earth, yet I am always gladly committing sins. Therefore, there is no man here (i.e. on the earth) who is foolish like me. O Viṣṇu, do I who have committed sins, not know that the tree of religious merit suddenly gives the fruit of happiness, O Nṛhari? O lord, I have no wealth to (undertake) the act of offering you a tree having flowers. Be pleased. O lord, what shall I do ? O god, this

bee of my heart, leaving the pair of your lotus-like feet, the place of the best nectar, constantly moves to a woman's face—misunderstanding it for a lotus which causes death and which is full of the phlegm of deceit. (My) hand is bereft of (giving) gifts. (My) mouth tells lies. (My) ears are always intent upon listening to sinful things. O Viṣṇu, remove these faults of me, your servant, since, O lord, you always destroy the blemishes of him who has sought your shelter. O Nṛhari, at one time, I have, in this world, obtained the very strong boat of your devotion in (order to cross) this fearful ocean of the worldly existence. Even in that case, I, under the sway of Destiny, remain a wicked-hearted person. I am constantly having an unhappy time. Is there a bright path, kind, pleasant and free from all afflictions, for crossing the mundane existence? O Viṣṇu, my eyes blinded by a great darkness in the form of delusion never go to you in this world. O destroyer of Keśin, O you whose lotus-like feet are saluted by all gods, since I see you today, this mind of me, even of a wicked nature, destroying the trouble of people that are tormented, has perished."

Vyāsa said:

65. Thus praised by him, the revered god, the lord of Lakṣmī, knower of words and saviour from the ocean of the worldly existence, said (these) words:

The lord said:

66-67. O best brāhmaṇa, I am constantly pleased with your devotion. Therefore, you will have full happiness soon. O brāhmaṇa, I have formerly emancipated you, though a sinner. Now you are my devotee. You will not face a calamity.

The brāhmaṇa said:

68-69. O Viṣṇu, who was I formerly? What sin did I commit? How did you formerly emancipate me, though a sinner? Since you are always kind, O lord, tell me all this—How was I born, and how was I created by you in this mundane existence?

The lord said:

70-73. O best brāhmaṇa, though this secret is not to be

divulged, I am telling it through affection for you. Listen. O best brāhmaṇa, formerly due to the ripening of your acts you were born in a region on the earth in the stock of a bird. You, always oppressed by hunger and thirst, wandered, eating insects and (drinking) the hot water of springs. You, born in the stock of a bird, always experiencing various afflictions formerly lived for four thousand years on the earth.

74-77. Once, a brāhmaṇa named Kulabhadra, knowing the full truth, devoutly worshipped me with offerings of eatables etc. on the bank of a river. The best brāhmaṇa, having offered me rice as the offering of eatables, again went home after leaving it just there. Then you, a hungry bird, having come down from the tree, ate all that rice offered as an offering of eatables to me. On just eating it you were instantly freed from very fearful sins. Once, on the completion of your life, you died, O brāhmaṇa.

78-80. Then by all means I sent my messengers to bring you (to me). Then putting you whose sins had perished, into a chariot, the hosts of messengers instantly came to the highest place. Enjoying all pleasures, difficult to be had even by gods, you stayed with me for thousands of crores of yugas. Then, O best brāhmaṇa, you went to (i.e. were born in) a pure brāhmaṇa-family.

81-84a. There (i.e. in that existence) also, very firm devotion for me was again produced in you. O excellent brāhmaṇa, having everyday worshipped me with employment of rituals, you will obtain my position at the end of your life. O brāhmaṇa, when I am pleased, you, though a sinner, will enjoy liberation. When sometime I am angry with a man, he is a sinner, even though he is pious; (but) O brāhmaṇa, when I am pleased, a man, though he is a sinner, obtains liberation. Therefore, O brāhmaṇa, O you of a good vow, may you have welfare. You are my devotee. I shall give you that place which cannot be obtained even by gods.

The brāhmaṇa said:

84b-86a. O lord, due to your grace, I have heard my former account. Now I desire to hear something. O lord, tell it. O lord, with whom are you pleased? O best of gods, with whom are you angry? With great favour please tell me all this.

The lord said:

86b-94. O best brāhmaṇa, I shall tell (you) all that in brief, due to which act pleasure is produced in my heart and due to which anger is produced. O best brāhmaṇa, with him who acts for my sake and who is without egotism, I am always pleased. With him who, full of piety and devotion, speaks calmly for me, I am always pleased. With that man who having secured sweetmeat gives it to me and who is equanimous in honour and insult, I am always pleased. With the man who knows me to be present in the bodies of all beings and who avoids harm to others, I am always pleased. With him who repeatedly thinking well, does his acts and who desires the good of cows and brāhmaṇas, I am always pleased. With him who would, with great effort, keep the word uttered by him, and who goes to him carefully who has sought his shelter, I am always pleased. O best brāhmaṇa, with him who always gives gifts to those who do not oblige him, and whose heart is always in me, I am always delighted. I have told (you) in brief with which act I am pleased.

95-111a. O brāhmaṇa, I (now) tell the act due to which I am angry. Listen to it. He who is engaged in harming others, who is cruel to all living beings, who is egoistic, who is always angry, makes me his enemy. He who tells lies, who is cruel, who is given to censuring others, who destroys the mode of the living of the wise, makes me his enemy. The fool who, through delusion, abandons his parents whose faults are not noticed, so also his wife, brother, sister, makes me his enemy. A dull-witted man who reproaches his parents, who insults his preceptor, makes me his enemy, O brāhmaṇa. Those who destroy groves, who destroy lakes, who destroy villages, make me their enemy. With those people who, on seeing another's wife are dejected, who listen to sinful discussion, I am always angry. With those who hate the lord, who snatch the wealth of the unprotected, who are traitors, I am always angry. With those who take away the price of cow's milk, who are the husbands of Śūdra women, who harm the holy fig-tree, I am always angry. With those who make a distinction among Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, and who are very much attached to other's wives, I am always angry. With those men of sinful minds, who eat on the Ekādaśī day through greed and who censure the Vedas, I am always angry. With those who are attached

to sinful thoughts and to plotting against their friends, and who destroy the dhātrī-tree I am always angry. With those who, deluded by lust, cohabit by day and who cohabit with a woman in her menses, I am always angry. O best one, those who, through folly, approach a woman who has not attained puberty, so also the rogues who approach a woman observing a vow, make me their enemy. I am always angry with them who take a meal at night on the new-moon day, so also with them who take two meals on Sundays. O brāhmaṇa, with those who do not avoid cohabitation, flesh, oil on new-moon day, I am always angry. What is the use of talking much in this matter? I (shall) tell you in brief. So also I am always angry with them who censure Viṣṇu's devotees.

Vyāsa said:

111b-117. Speaking like this lord Viṣṇu suddenly vanished. And that brāhmaṇa, having abandoned his sleep, got up from his bed. Due to the words uttered by Viṣṇu the brāhmaṇa, the devotee of Viṣṇu, gave up all (other) activities and was engaged in the employment of rituals. This is the fruit of (i.e. obtained by) them who even eat the articles of food (after they are) offered to Viṣṇu. I do not know how much fruit would be theirs who have worshipped Viṣṇu. O best one, O Jaimini, I (shall) tell you in brief. Listen. A man, having performed Viṣṇu's worship (but) once, obtains the highest position. In the world manhood is difficult to be obtained. Even in it worship of Viṣṇu is (difficult to be had). O best brāhmaṇa, there also devotion is declared to be difficult. That respectable man in whose mind there is a desire to cross the ocean of the mundane existence, should everyday devoutly worship Viṣṇu with all rites.

CHAPTER TWENTY

The Great Efficacy of Giving (Charity)

Vyāsa said:

1. O brāhmaṇa, I have told you in brief the fruit of Viṣṇu's worship. Now I shall tell (you about) the presents. Listen attentively.

2-3. Of giving presents and penance, giving presents is said to be superior. Due to penance, it is said, there is sin. In the act of giving presents there is no sin. Penance is (said to be) the best in Kṛtayuga. And meditation is (said to be) the best in Tretā (yuga). Worship is (said to be) the best in Dvāpara (yuga). Giving presents is (said to be) the best in Kali (yuga).

4-6. Therefore, the wise desiring the highest position, should always make presents for pleasing Lakṣmī's lord in Kaliyuga. As the moon waxes digit by digit, similar is said to be the condition of giving gifts and of penance by the wise. O best brāhmaṇa, wealth should be stored (beginning) with even a straw. A wise man should use his stored wealth in giving gifts.

7-8. A man who, though having wealth, does not enjoy or give it, should be known to be a poor man, deprived of giving gifts or of enjoyment. O brāhmaṇa, with whom does wealth come? Who goes with it? When death comes, that which is given before in this world comes (to a man's help).

9-11. Those men who become poor due to repeatedly giving gifts should not be known to be poor. They are the great lords in the next world. Those who save wealth due to miserliness should be known to be very unhappy. O Jaimini, at the end, giving it up all, they, being disappointed, go (i.e. die). O best brāhmaṇa, a man bereft of a good, strong power (lives) in the other world devoid of wealth and relatives. Whatever is not given by a man, does not stand by him there.

12. O best brāhmaṇa, the devotees of Viṣṇu, having devotion and faith, should everyday devoutly give small gifts.

13-19a. O best brāhmaṇa, the wise have declared the gift of food as the best of all gifts. So also the gift of water. Vital airs cannot stay in the body without food. (Therefore) one who gives food should be known to be the giver of life. (And) the giver

of life is the giver of everything. Therefore, the giver of food obtains the fruit of all (kinds of) gifts. O Jaimini, giving water is similar to giving food. Food would not exist without water. Therefore, water is given. O best brāhmaṇa, hunger and thirst are said to be equal. Therefore, the wise have said the gift of water to be the best. Water is the life of men. Life is not their life. Therefore, for the protection of life, a wise man should give water. O best brāhmaṇa, he who has given food and water on the earth, has given all gifts. There is no doubt about it.

19b. Listen to the greatness of the gift of food and the gift of water:

20-26a. In the city of Hastināpura itself there lived a prostitute beautiful like a divine damsel, rich like Kubera. She was known as Ratividagdhā, and had all the marks (of a beautiful lady). There (also) lived a brāhmaṇa lady, named Kṣemaṅkarī, born in a great family. That daughter of a brāhmaṇa, who possessed all virtues, was a widow. O best brāhmaṇa, that brāhmaṇa lady had her mind attached to paramours. She, doing prohibited act (s) became thoughtless. O brāhmaṇa, the brāhmaṇa lady, being near the prostitute, formed friendship with her, and took to the life of a prostitute, O Jaimini, the prostitute and the brāhmaṇa lady together, joyfully, everyday committed innumerable sins. Then that Ratividagdhā attained old age. The brāhmaṇa lady of a bad character also (became old). Sometime that chief prostitute who was aging, who was very much amazed, and who was full of modesty, said these words to her friend, O brāhmaṇa:

Ratividagdhā said:

26b-32a. O friend, along with you, I committed many fearful sins. Even now I have a great thought (i.e. a strong desire) for (committing) sins. All my beauty and strength has been taken away by old age. (The condition) like this causing ill-health, does not make (me) give up hope. I, who have committed sins, have secured very great real estate. Seeing this my death, as it were, has approached. Who will protect my wealth obtained through sins which I committed, when I die issuless? Therefore, O friend, if you consent, I desire to give to brāhmaṇas all my wealth obtained unjustly.

The brāhmaṇa lady said:

32b-34. See, I have always given to unworthy recipients all the wealth which I had collected. Therefore, I am without wealth. What shall I give to a brāhmaṇa? If you have wealth, then make a present of it quickly.

Hearing these words of her, the prostitute was very much glad.

35-43. With all her wealth she made a present of food. There was an excellent brāhmaṇa named Hariśarman, who very devoutly always worshipped lord Viṣṇu. He who had curbed his senses and his anger, who was free from harming (others) and hypocrisy, practised a great (i.e. severe) penance to please Lakṣmī's lord. With sandal, flowers, offerings, incense, ghee and lamps he everyday worshipped Viṣṇu, the lord of gods. Even though the brāhmaṇa was rich he was always afraid of spending money. O best brāhmaṇa, in the house of the miser, ants, rats and other living beings, were always hungry. O best brāhmaṇa, he, without (i.e. not doing) the act of giving gifts, himself enjoyed everyday all the wealth that he had earned. For fear of being requested (to give) money, he never conversed with his friends and his brāhmaṇa relatives. O best brāhmaṇa, counting his very large wealth in his own house, he, regarding himself as the greatest, delighted himself. O brāhmaṇa, at the time destined for death, that very rich brāhmaṇa, that prostitute and that brāhmaṇa lady died at the same time.

44-45. Then, very fierce messengers, with nooses and mallets in their hands, of god Dharmarāja (i.e. Yama) came to take them (to him). Then, O Jaimini, those messengers like Caṇḍa, took them and instantly went to Yama's city along a difficult path.

Caṇḍa said (*to Yama*):

46. O lord of life, by your order Hariśarman is brought here. So also the prostitute, the brāhmaṇa lady (are brought here). Look at them standing before you.

47. Seeing them, the lord of life laughed, O best brāhmaṇa, and spoke thus to Citragupta skilled in all jobs:

Yama said:

48. O wise, very intelligent Citragupta, think over, from the beginning all the good and evil acts of these.

49. Then by Yama's order, the wise Citragupta considered all their good as well as evil acts.

Citragupta said:

50-56. O god, listen I shall tell (you) their religious merit and sins, which this prostitute, this brāhmaṇa lady and Hariśarman did. It is not possible to narrate the sins which this prostitute called Ratividagdhā, of a very wicked heart, committed. O Sun's son, this one, when she became old, gave food with all her wealth that was unjustly earned. Due to the efficacy of the gift of food, she was abandoned by all her sins committed during crores of existences, which would have resulted in her residence in houses of torments (i.e. where torments are inflicted). O great king, those who, even though they are sinners, give gift of food on the earth, go to the highest position of Viṣṇu. As many sins of (i.e. due to) brahminicide perish as the number of foods given by men on the earth. There is no doubt about it. Sin, leaving the bodies of the givers of food, goes to the vessels of those receiving it, O Sun's son.

57-58. Therefore, the wise ones do not accept the food of sinners. Those fools who accept it through delusion are sinners only. O lord, I have told the good and evil acts of the prostitute. Listen to the good and evil acts of the brāhmaṇa lady.

59-67a. O lord, this brāhmaṇa lady named Kṣemaṅkarī, born in a pure family, and the wife of Bhadrakīrti, committed evil acts. Abandoning the acts of (i.e. suited to) the stage of life, she, proud of her youth, ardently longing for union with paramours, became most sinful. O king, once in her childhood, while playing with (other) children, she dug a ditch having four corners on the road. On the same day clouds showered water. O lord, that ditch made by her was filled with water. O king, at noon, a thirsty bull scorched by the sun's heat drank water there. Due to the efficacy of the act of giving water only, all her great sins perished, O wise son of the Sun. Freed from all sins, she went to Viṣṇu's abode. O lord of gods, this wicked brāhmaṇa lady who

had committed sins, became freed from all sins due to the effcacy of the gift of water. This brāhmaṇa is a great devotee of the Disc-holder, the god of gods. Therefore, O lord of life, Viṣṇu alone is said to be superior to him.

Vyāsa said:

67b-69. Having heard those words of Citragupta, Yama saluted the prostitute, the brāhmaṇa lady and the brāhmaṇa. Having heard about the worship of them and the members of their family, Yama, very much pleased, laughed and spoke words containing soft letters (i.e. spoke soft words), O Jaimini.

Yama said:

70-71. All you noble ones have all your sins perished. Go to the place of Viṣṇu, lord of Lakṣmī, which gives all pleasures.

Then Yama, having put them into a divine (chariot) which was made of gold and to which royal swans were yoked, sent them to the place of the Disc-holder (i.e. Viṣṇu).

72. Then all of them, freed from sins, mounted upon a divine chariot, and adorned by all ornaments, went to the lord's city.

73-75. That prostitute, with all her sins perished, obtained the proximity of the god, and lived happily for a long time, O brāhmaṇa. So also the brāhmaṇa lady. Seeing that Hariśarman in the assembly Viṣṇu, through affection, gave him an excellent seat made of gold. Having gladly honoured the best brāhmaṇa by offering him water for washing his feet, a respectful offering, water for sipping, Viṣṇu asked him seated on an excellent seat (there):

The lord said:

76. O brāhmaṇa, tell me about your happiness (i.e. How do you do?). Since you are my excellent devotee, stay for a long time in my abode, free from all troubles.

The brāhmaṇa said:

77. O god, O lord, on remembering you, you are seen. (And

the devotee) gets happiness. I have obtained your proximity. What greater happiness is there than this?

Vyāsa said:

78-80. Hearing his words spoken through affection, the lord gave the brāhmaṇa his similarity (i.e. assimilated the brāhmaṇa into himself). The lord of Lakṣmī, gave him all happiness difficult to be obtained; but remembering his miserliness, did not give him his measure of food. After a couple of days, the brāhmaṇa, being without food (and therefore) overcome by hunger, and being humble through modesty, said to Viṣṇu, the lord of gods:

The brāhmaṇa said:

81-90. O lord, as the fruits of many austerities I have secured your position. O lord, even here how am I everyday suffering from hunger? Even on beds I am fanned with breezes from white chowries by celestial hosts of divine maidens who have attained the prime of youth? O lord, like the best king, I am adorned with large garlands of fragrant flowers and my entire body is smeared with sandal. O Viṣṇu, by your order, everyday ladies with beautiful bodies dance to the accompaniment of songs before me. Everyday, gods like Indra always carry the dust-particles from my feet (on their heads), which beautify the crowns on their heads. And, O lord of the world, gods, divine sages, (other) sages, always praise me with eulogies like (my) servants. I have become Viṣṇu, having four arms, dark, holding a conch, a disc, a mace, and a lotus, having eyes like full-blown lotuses, wearing a yellow garment, and fine ear-rings. I am having a golden sacred thread, a crown and also ear-rings. By gods I am seen to be another Garuḍa-bannered (god) like you. O lord, you have given me all these pleasures difficult to be obtained. (Then) O highest lord, how (i.e. why) do you not give me food? As a tree is burnt by the fire in its hollow, my body is being very much scorched by the fire of hunger.

91-93. O Viṣṇu, with the digestive fire of the stomach blazing, I, whose body is afflicted, do not like this happiness given by you. None else worshipped by hosts of gods, except you, the lord of the world, has ever been worshipped by me through

(physical) acts, mentally, or through speech. I have not been devoted to him (i.e. any other god than you) even in a dream. (Then) due to which fault (of mine), O lord, you are not giving me food?

Vyāsa said:

94-95. Then lord Viṣṇu, full of joy, said to him: "Well-being to you, O brāhmaṇa. Go quickly to Brahmā."

Hearing these words, the brāhmaṇa quickly went to Brahmā. Pointing out to him his miserliness, Brahmā said to him:

Brahmā said:

96-97. There is no doubt that (the fruit of) an action, obtained with difficulty, which is not given to a brāhmaṇa nor enjoyed by oneself, perishes. I have told you the entire cause of your affliction. O brāhmaṇa, well-being to you; you who have come from Yama, (now) go without any doubt.

The brāhmaṇa said

98. Through your grace I have heard fully (about) this maturity of my acts. Now tell (me) which gifts should be given by men.

Brhamā said:

99-101. There are many (kinds) of gifts. (All) cannot be described. O brāhmaṇa, I (shall) tell (about them) in brief. Listen attentively. O best brāhmaṇa, the pious one who has made the gift of land, the best of all gifts, should be known to be the giver of all (kinds of) gifts. O best brāhmaṇa, he who gives (a piece of) land measuring a gocarman,[1] would, being freed from all sins, go to the highest place.

102-107. Listen to the religious merit of (i.e. earned by) him who gives land along with the crop to a poor brāhmaṇa, O best brāhmaṇa. Freed from all sins, he would go to Viṣṇu's city. There he enjoys all happiness as long as fourteen Indras (rule).

1. Gocarman—A particular measure of surface thus defined by Vasiṣṭha:
daśahastena vaṁśena daśavaṁsān samantataḥ/
pañca cābhyādhikān dadyādetadgocarma cocyate//

Again obtaining land, he would be a sovereign emperor. That man, enjoying the entire earth for a long time, would become Viṣṇu. Since, brāhmaṇas should accept the land, even after abandoning (i.e. not accepting) hundreds of (other) gifts, the giver of the land and its receiver both go to heaven. O best brāhmaṇa, that dull brāhmaṇa who would reject the gift of land, would be very much afflicted in every existence. Even with him Viṣṇu is pleased and gives the highest position to him who would give a gift of land, even after obtaining it from others.

108-110. O brāhmaṇa, listen to the religious merit of (i.e. obtained by) him who gives or causes (someone else) to give a village to a poor brāhmaṇa. The wise one would live in Viṣṇu's world for as many periods of Manu as there are dust-particles on the earth or as there are drops in showers. O brāhmaṇa, I am telling you about the religious merit of the noble one who gives a milch-cow along with her calf (to a brāhmaṇa). Listen.

111-121. A man who gives a cow to a brāhmaṇa would obtain that fruit which one would get by giving the earth with the seven islands along with the crop (on it). He who gives a bull to a brāhmaṇa with a family, is freed from sins and goes to Rudra's world. For as many thousands of kalpas as the number of small hair on the body of the bull, he rejoices with Rudra. He who gives a cow to one proficient in the Vedas, never returns (to this world) from Rudra's world. O best brāhmaṇa, he who gives a bull with sesamum seeds (to a brāhmaṇa) would live in Rudra's abode in accordance with the number of the sesamum seeds. He who gives gold even of the measure of a sesamum seed to a brāhmaṇa, goes, along with crores (of the members) of his family to Viṣṇu's abode. He who would devoutly give silver to a poor brāhmaṇa, reaches the world of the Moon and drinks nectar (there). O best brāhmaṇa, he who gives a diamond or a pearl or a coral or any (other) gem, goes to Indra's world. O best brāhmaṇa, he, the generous-minded one, who gives the gift of a horse (to a brāhmaṇa) obtains the kingship of kings of gandharvas. There is no doubt about it. He who gives a young elephant without blemishes, would become a partner in the kingdom of gods like Indra, O brāhmaṇa. He too, who would give a palanquin carried by men, along with presents, to a brāhmaṇa,

would also, having secured Indra's position, live there for four kalpas.

122-126. O brāhmaṇa, I shall tell, in brief, (about) the religious merit of (i.e. got by) him who gives the gift of śālagrāma stone to a brāhmaṇa; (please) listen. The giver of a śālagrāma stone obtains the same fruit as one obtains by giving the earth with the seven islands and with mountains and forests. The giver of a śālagrāma stone would get a crores times greater fruit than the one which men obtain by giving gold, jewels or other valuable things equal to their own weight.[1] O best brāhmaṇa, he who has given a śālagrāma stone has indeed given the fourteen worlds. O best man, that man who gives gold etc. equal to his weight, (lives) in heaven wearing divine garments, and (becomes) a king.

127-130. He is not born again in (i.e. from) the mother's womb. That best man who gives his daughter adorned (with ornaments, in marriage, to a worthy groom), would go to Viṣṇu's abode without (being required) to be born again. That foolish man who through delusion, sells his daughter, would go to the fearful hell called Purīṣahrada. O brāhmaṇa, that son that is born from the daughter (thus) sold, should be known like a cāṇḍāla, expelled from all religious rites. A man knowing the holy texts, should never see the face of him who sells his daughter.

131-136. If through ignorance he sees it, he should look at the Sun. O brāhmaṇa, all that auspicious act that is done in the presence of him who sells his daughter, would become fruitless, O brāhmaṇa. For the seller of his daughter there is no escape from hell. The one who gives his daughter (in marriage) does not again return from heaven. What is the use of talking much in this regard? I shall tell (it to you) in brief. The fruit of (the gift of) a diamond, (a piece) of land, and a daughter is hundred times more. Listen to the religious merit of (i.e. obtained by) him who gives a pair of shoes, an umbrella on the earth. I shall tell it to you in brief. Endowed with all affluence he would live here (i.e. in this world) for a hundred years. Reaching Indra's city after death (he would live there) for four hundred kalpas. He who gives a new garment goes to the best position.

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1. Tulāpuruṣa—Gold, jewels or other valuable things equal to a man's weight (given to a brāhmaṇa as a gift).

137-147. He who would give an old garment, or an aging[1] cow or a girl in her menses, would always go to hell. O brāhmaṇa, a man who gives (the gift of) a fruit, goes to the abode of gods (i.e. heaven). There he enjoys the fruit like nectar for thousands of kalpas. O brāhmaṇa, the giver of vegetables goes to the position of lord Śiva. There he enjoys, along with gods, rice boiled in milk for two kalpas. A giver of milk, of curd, of ghee and of butter-milk obtains the drink of nectar in front of lord Viṣṇu. O brāhmaṇa, a man who gives flowers, sandal, (would go) to the abode of gods (i.e. heaven and), decorated with flowers and sandal would stay there for thousands of yugas. O best brāhmaṇa, he who offers a bed, comes to Brahmā's world, and lies for a long time on a bed there. O best brāhmaṇa, he who offers a lamp or a seat, being free from all sins, is seated, surrounded by rows of burning lamps, on divine throne. O king(?), the giver of a tāmbūla enjoys all auspicious things. Lying on the bosom of divine ladies in heaven, he eats tāmbūla. O best brāhmaṇa, O best man, he who gives knowledge, would, after securing Viṣṇu's proximity, stay (near him) for a couple of hundred yugas. Then, O best brāhmaṇa, having secured knowledge there, he obtains, through the grace of Lakṣmī's lord, liberation, difficult to obtain. He who teaches a helpless, much afflicted brāhmaṇa, goes to Viṣṇu's abode, from which return (to this earth) is difficult to be had.

148-153. Even the best brāhmaṇa belonging to a noble family, does not shine without knowledge. Therefore, those who teach a brāhmaṇa, go to the highest position. A brāhmaṇa, to whom deities resort, is actually a god. The preceptor of all castes does not at all shine without knowledge. He who has taught a brāhmaṇa, has given (all) the gifts like gold, that are there in the world. O best brāhmaṇa, I (shall) tell you in brief the religious merit of that man who devoutly gives the gift of a book. For every letter that is there on every leaf of the book, he would get the fruit of giving a crore of tawny cows. The giver of the book would live in Vaikuṇṭha for as many periods of Manu as the days twice-borns read that book.

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1. Rajatī—*Jaratī* seems to be the correct reading and not *rajatī* which means 'whitish'.

154-160. O brāhmaṇa, there are many such gifts. Even in two hundred (months) who is in this world able to describe them correctly? All those sins like brāhmaṇicide which are committed by men are destroyed (by gifts). Therefore, one should give gifts. The fruit of that gift is obtained as long as the material of the gift given by the three castes through their religious merit, exists. There is no doubt that a man obtains the religious merit, crore times more than the gift given to please Lakṣmī's lord. O brāhmaṇa, therefore, an intelligent man should devoutly give a gift to please Viṣṇu. The wise have declared giving gifts to be superior even to penance. Therefore, a wise man should, even with an effort, give gifts. O brāhmaṇa, there is none like him in this world who does both—giving gifts and practising penance.

CHAPTER TWENTYONE

Brāhmaṇas; Gift of Food and Water

Vyāsa said:

1. Having heard Brahmā's words, that best brāhmaṇa, Hariśarman, again saluted him devoutly, and spoke, O Jaimini:

Hariśarman said:

2. O lord, please tell me as to whom the many gifts that you narrated should be given.

Brahmā said:

3-4. Of all the castes brāhmaṇa is the most venerable person. Gifts should be given to him by men having devotion and faith. A brāhmaṇa is the resort of all deities. He is actually a god on the earth. He saves a giver in this ocean of the universe, which is difficult to cross.

The brāhmaṇa said:

5. O best god, you have declared brāhmaṇa to be the most

respectable of all castes. But out of them (i.e. brāhmaṇas) who is the greatest? To whom is a gift given?

Brahmā said:

6-8. O best brāhmaṇa, all the brāhmaṇas are superior, and all are always respectable. But those brāhmaṇas who are spoilt by such blemishes as theft, so also our haters, are not respectable. So (gifts should) not be given to others. Brāhmaṇas of bad conduct are not respectable. Śūdras with their senses curbed are respectable. So also those who eat what is prohibited (are not to be honoured). Cows are supposed to be the mothers of people. O best brāhmaṇa, I am now particularly telling the greatness of brāhmaṇas through affection for you. Listen to it attentively.

9-11. Brāhmaṇas are respectable to kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras. Brāhmaṇas are respectable to one another, and brāhmaṇas are to be honoured. O best man, the life, sons, fame, wealth of him who would worship a brāhmaṇa looking upon him as Viṣṇu, increase. O brāhmaṇa, Viṣṇu desires to cut off the head of that foolish man who hoards (wealth) on the earth.

12-15. O Jaimini(?), a wise man should not salute a brāhmaṇa who has flowers in his hand, who has water in his hand, who has (the idol of) a god in his hand, and whose body is smeared with oil. A wise man should not salute a brāhmaṇa who is in water, who is in a temple of a deity, whose mind is absorbed in meditation, and who is worshipping a deity. O best brāhmaṇa, a wise man should not salute a brāhmaṇa performing outside (i.e. morning) duties, who is taking his meal, so also a brāhmaṇa who is singing Sāmans. An intelligent man should not salute everyone of the brāhmaṇas (separately) where many brāhmaṇas are present, O best brāhmaṇa.

16. He who would not salute (in return) a brāhmaṇa who has devoutly saluted, should be known to be like a cāṇḍāla, and should never be saluted.

17. Parents saluted by their son, should not salute him (in return). All brāhmaṇas saluted by (other) brāhmaṇas, should salute them (in return).

18. The wise ones do not hate brāhmaṇas and cows who have committed faults. If through folly they hate, Viṣṇu is always angry with them.

19. Yama puts a needle into both the eyes of him who looks angrily at suppliants (and) brāhmaṇas.

20. O brāhmaṇa, Yama puts a heated iron rod into that mouth with which fools reproach (others).

21. In that house where a brāhmaṇa eats (food), Viṣṇu himself (lives). So also all deities, manes and divine sages.

22-28. Yama quickly destroys all the sin in the body of him, the wise one, who would carry just a drop of water from the foot of a brāhmaṇa. All the holy places that exist in crores of worlds, exist in the right foot of a brāhmaṇa. He whose head is sprinkled with water from the feet of a brāhmaṇa, has bathed at all holy places and is initiated for all sacrifices. By carrying (on his head) the water from the foot of a brāhmaṇa all his fierce sins like the murder of a brāhmaṇa perish at once. By carrying (on the head) the water from the foot of a brāhmaṇa, all diseases like consumption, highly afflicting, perish instantly. The dead ancestors gratified by the water offered at the feet of a brāhmaṇa for the dead ancestors, live in heaven as long as the moon and the stars (exist). By a wise man who would worship a brāhmaṇa's feet with dūrvās after washing them, Viṣṇu, the lord of the world and the best of all gods, is worshipped.

29-33. I am telling the truth (and) the truth (only). That mortal who would carry on his head the remains of the offering at the feet of brāhmaṇas, obtains eternal liberation. That best man who goes round a brāhmaṇa while keeping him to his right, has gone round the earth with the seven islands. He who would give a fruit or a tāmbūla after wetting the feet of brāhmaṇas is free from a disease if he is ill, and from a sin if he is a sinner. One that is bound gets free from his bond on washing the feet of brāhmaṇas. By washing the feet of brāhmaṇas those women who have no children or whose children are dead, have many children and their children live (long). O best brāhmaṇa, listen to the greatness (of the wetting of a brāhmaṇa's feet) which removes all sins.

34a. I (shall) tell you in brief about (the importance of) wetting the feet of a brāhmaṇa.

34b-46a. Formerly there was a brāhmaṇa named Bhadrakriya, born in a pure family and highly devoted to worshipping Viṣṇu. He knew the Vedas, he was tranquil, and was highly

devoted to his parents. He honoured guests; so also he honoured his kinsmen. Once that best brāhmaṇa, with his body smeared with oil, went, taking with him clothes used for bathing, to a lake to bathe (then). That best brāhmaṇa who knew all holy texts and who was engaged in the well-being of all people, having bathed made offerings to his dead ancestors in the proper manner. Having finished the bath-rite, and repeating Viṣṇu's names, he came to his own house and was engrossed in worshipping Viṣṇu. With very cold water he washed both his feet. That brāhmaṇa who honoured (other) brāhmaṇas, who had washed his feet and hands, placed all utensils for the bath (of the deity). O best brāhmaṇa, to the region of the door came a dog that was tormented by the heat of the summer sun, resembling that of fire. He lay in the very cold water used by the brāhmaṇa for washing his feet. Due to the touch of the water used by the brāhmaṇa for washing his feet, the extremely sinful dog was freed from all sins committed during crores of existences. The dog lying at the door of the house and overcome by thirst, begged water. He was beaten by the brāhmaṇa's servants. O brāhmaṇa, the dog died there only. Due to the touch of the wetness of the brāhmaṇa's feet, the dog was free from sins. Seeing the noble one, as it were, the lord of the universe in an embodied form, the brāhmaṇa ascetic bowing with modesty, said to him:

The brāhmaṇa said:

46bc. O noble one, tell (me) who you are. Due to which act are you afflicted? (How) are you born in the stock of a dog, full of many afflictions?

Brahmā said:

47-57. Having heard the words of the brāhmaṇa sage, the very glorious one told all his account from the beginning. "I was a very powerful sovereign emperor named Śaṁkha. I protected the whole earth for four thousand years. All obeyed my orders. I conquered all enemies in battles. I gave all (kinds of) gifts, and protected my relatives. O glorious one, once I, struck by the arrows of Cupid, forcibly kidnapped a very beautiful bride of a man. As a result of that sin my glory was in danger. Then, I, very powerful one, was expelled by all people. Then, I,

deprived of my kingdom, lived in a forest. Fatigued with hunger and thirst, I sometime died (there). Having gone to Yama's city I experienced distress for a long time. O best brāhmaṇa, listen to it, causing pain to the heart of the listeners. I experienced a very fearful mass of the flames of blazing fire on the land full of redness due to heated iron weapons. Then by Yama's order I remained clasping a very fearful iron pillar, heated by a blazing fire. Then Yama's servants sprinkled me with streams of cold water (sharp) like razors. There in Yama's abode I experienced another great misery. Then again and again being born in the remaining hells, I experienced great misery in a sinful stock for a long time.

58-59. Due to the contact of the water (flowing) from your feet I am rescued from the bond of sin. I am going to the highest position difficult to be obtained even by meditating saints. O best brāhmaṇa, you are my preceptor. My salutation to you, the noble one. Being freed from sins due to your grace I (shall) go to Viṣṇu's city."

Bhadrakriya said:

60-71. O king, a man should never (forget) the account of the previous existence. Therefore, abandoning one's son, one should always follow a wise course of action. A king who practises wisdom never faces misery. He enjoys the earth free from troublesome fellows for a long time. That wicked king who does not like wisdom is soon deprived of glory. There is no doubt about this. A king who desires a (long) life, strength, glory, friends, victory and happiness should always appoint wise ministers. Wise men, disregarding a king, abandon him with care. In an assembly without the wise, statesmanship is not strong. Then, when statesmanship of a king has suddenly vanished, the royal glory along with the treasure, the army and the elephants, vanishes. Kings desiring (their) well-being never hate brāhmaṇas, astrologers, physicians and kinsmen. A king who hates astrologers loses his glory. The one hating physicians loses his life. One who hates his kinsmen loses his family. One who hates brāhmaṇas suffers from all afflictions. Kings are said to be the fathers and subjects to be the sons. Therefore, kings protect the subjects as sons born of themselves. A king should love his citizens as his

own sons. The wise ones should know that calamities hang over the heads of those very sinful kings who harass their subjects. Viṣṇu, the lord of gods, protects wise kings as they protect their own subjects. The two, viz. looking after and punishing the subjects, bring him good fortune.

72-75. Kings without (these) two should be known to be mean kings. Kings curbing the wicked and protecting the virtuous rejoice on the earth for a long time. A king should preserve with care the wealth that is obtained justly. A king of bad conduct would not prosper in a calamity. O best brāhmaṇa, kings desiring their own good, always speedily observe the auspicious and inauspicious (happenings) in their kingdom through spies as their eyes. A king should entertain fear till an invasion by an enemy takes place.

76-80. When that fear (of an invasion) has come, the king should act fearlessly. Towards his kinsman, or a friend, or a minister, he should be serious on his face (i.e. outwardly) but should mentally have love only (for him). His ministers, kinsmen, sons, subjects and brothers do not look upon a king without seriousness as a king. First they keep away, so also they do not stand before him. People do not desire the shelter of a king who has given up seriousness. O brāhmaṇa, a king desiring to be (i.e. continue) a king for a long time, should not have only one minister in the entire kingdom for its prosperity. He would take away the position of very intelligent servants.

81-91a. Therefore, the king should appoint another man in the assembly. A king won over by foolish women and always engaged in singing and playing upon musical instruments, so also without horses and elephants, would suddenly face a calamity. O best brāhmaṇa, following (good) practices, truthfulness, keeping one's promise, seriousness are the characteristics of kings. How can he be (called) king who is without valour? How can he be (called) king who has not conquered the land of others? After the land of another (king) is conquered, the king obtains the inexhaustible fruit of a horse-sacrifice for every step that he would go over. When a king, desiring to conquer another king's land, is killed by other kings in a battle, then he, being freed from all sins, would go to the highest place. A king who gets victory in a battle, obtains the highest position. Or if he is killed in a battle

he would obtain Indra's affluence in heaven. That king who kills a warrior who has abandoned his weapon, who has lost his energy, or who is bent upon fleeing, has a downfall. O best brāhmaṇa, both he who is bent upon fleeing and he who kills him, would stay in a hell extremely unbearable. O best brāhmaṇa, a courageous warrior and he who kills him would both live in heaven as long as the moon and the sun exist. What is the use of talking too much in this regard? I shall tell (you) in brief. A king who protects his subjects, never sinks.

Brahmā said:

91b-96a. O brāhmaṇa, when the king was speaking like this, a great shower of flowers fell on him whose sin had dropped, from the sky. Then messengers of the noble Viṣṇu came there taking (with them) a beautiful chariot to which royal swans were yoked. That king whose sins had gone away, got into the divine chariot made of gold and went to Viṣṇu's abode. I have told (you) this greatness of the water (flowing) from a brāhmaṇa's feet. Having listened to it devoutly, a man would obtain liberation. Thus I have told you everything that you desired to hear. O brāhmaṇa, go to the abode of Viṣṇu. Well-being to you.

Hariśarman said:

96b-98a. Due to the great fire of hunger my body is being burnt. O lord of gods, tell me by which means my hunger would be satiated. You are a devotee, loving your devotees. Everyday due to the very blazing fire of hunger I am having very great pain.

Brahmā said:

98b-99. O best brāhmaṇa, eat the flesh of your body which you have always fed with food; for, those who satisfy themselves with the food (meant) for another (person), eat the flesh of their own bodies in the other world.

Vyāsa said:

100. Hearing the cruel words of Brahmā, that best brāhmaṇa again praised the god with words having pleasing letters (i.e. with pleasing words).

The brāhmaṇa said:

101-105. O god of gods, O you who protect him who seeks your refuge, pardon all my faults. Salutation to you, O greatest god. O lord, there are all faults (i.e. committed by) and no virtues of men who carry bodies full of feces and urine. Please pardon the fault committed by me who was deluded. The good do not take into account the fault of those who have sought their shelter. O Brahman, it is not possible for living beings to eat the flesh of their own bodies. Tell what is proper for them, and by what they will be gratified.

Thus the brāhmaṇa devoutly spoke these words. The omniscient Brahmā, dear to brāhmaṇas, and kind, spoke (thus):

Brahmā said:

106-109a. O best brāhmaṇa, do not grieve. Listen to my good words as to the means by which you will now obtain food. The son is born from oneself. (Therefore) the son is like one's own self. Therefore, the manes obtain (the fruit of) the deed of their sons. For a long time you will stay in the very beautiful abode of the god.

Then that brāhmaṇa, thus addressed by him, and oppressed by hunger, appeared before his son in a dream and said to him:

The brāhmaṇa said:

109b-116. O best son, you are initiated. May you have the highest good! O dear one, I am your father. Listen to my grief. O son, due to the efficacy of penance I have obtained the highest abode. Tormented by the fire of hunger I have always been sinking there. O son, O brāhmaṇa, if you have affection for me as your father, then now give food and water to me. Whatever is offered by sons to their fathers on the earth, is obtained by the fathers, since sons are born from (their) fathers' bodies. Formerly I very devoutly worshipped the lord with songs, musical instruments, dances and auspicious recitals of hymns, sandals, incenses, offerings of eatables and lamps full of ghee, so also with water for washing the feet, respectful offerings and water

for sipping, so also meditations and invocations. O son, I, a miser, never gave the lord of the world food, or (other) offerings of eatables. I never honoured a guest with water or other (articles).

117-122a. I never satisfied my kinsmen or suppliants. O son, due to that act only, I, being tormented by the fire of hunger, am everyday sinking (while I live) in Viṣṇu's abode. Therefore, O best of the learned men, by giving the gifts of food and water to brāhmaṇas, protect my life. If, through cruelty you do not do so, then I shall eat my flesh only in Viṣṇu's abode.

Then that hungry brāhmaṇa, with his throat, lips and palate dried up, speaking like this to his son, suddenly disappeared. Then when in the bright morning the sun appeared, the (son who was) initiated thought over what his father had said to him in his dream.

122b-124a. 'Due to the fault in his acts my father, with his body burnt by hunger, everyday is sinking. Fie upon me who am a dull, miserly person. I too am giving nothing through my father's religious merit.'

124b-125. Thinking like this in many ways the brāhmaṇa, though initiated, with faith and devotion gave gifts to brāhmaṇas, O best brāhmaṇa.

126-131a. Listen for how much period he remained in Viṣṇu's abode free from hunger and thirst due to the efficacy of that religious merit. The day of Brahmā is said to be (i.e. to consist) of four thousand yugas. During that day only fourteen periods of Manu pass. During that day only fourteen Indras are said (to rule). O best brāhmaṇa, they enjoy their separate domains. Having enjoyed their auspicious domains during one day of Brahmā, the fourteen Indras and Manus perish. When that Hariśarman lived in the very bright world of Viṣṇu, which gave pleasure and which was charming, one day of Brahmā passed. There, he, having enjoyed charming pleasures for this much period, obtained the highest knowledge and entered Viṣṇu's body.

Vyāsa said:

131b-132. O Jaimini, in the world there is no other gift like

that of food and water. Fruits of all gifts are had from the gifts of food and water. (For them) there is no test of a worthy recipient, or any restriction about time.

133-134. The wise have expressed (their view) regarding the gifts of food and water. (They say:) Gifts of food and water should always be made. Those men who, with great respect, recite this (description of the) greatness (of the gifts) of food and water and of brāhmaṇas, obtain the fruit of the gift of food and water and go to Viṣṇu's abode, giving happiness.

CHAPTER TWENTYTWO

The Greatness of Ekādaśī

Jaimini said:

1-2. O preceptor, by your grace I have heard the sin-destroying greatness along with its history, of the water flowing from a brāhmaṇa's feet, the auspicious greatness of Gaṅgā, so also the fruit of the worship of Viṣṇu, the excellent (account of the) greatness of the gift of food and of water.

3-5. O best sage, now I desire to hear carefully the entire fruit of (the vow of) Ekādaśī, which destroys all sins. Why is the Ekādaśī(-vow) the greatest? What is declared to be the mode of (its observance)? When is it observed? What is its fruit? Tell me. O you ocean of virtues, who is the most adorable deity there? Please tell me what fault (accrues) to him who does not observe it.

Vyāsa said:

6-12. O brāhmaṇa sage, none else but Viṣṇu is able to narrate the entire fruit of the Ekādaśī(vow). Therefore, I shall tell it in brief. The highest Puruṣa (Brahman) having first created the world with the mobile and the immobile, created the 'Man of Sin' (sin personified) for curbing all. His head was the murder of brāhmaṇas. His eyes were the drink of liquor. His face was the theft of gold. His ears were the violation of the preceptor's bed

(i.e. his wife). His nose was the murder of women. His arms were the sin of killing cows. His neck was the snatching of deposits. His throat was causing abortions. The tip of his heart was adultery. His belly was the murder of friends. His waist ending with the hollow of his navel was the murder of those who sought his shelter. His thigh was the preceptor's censure. His penis was the sale of (one's) daughter. His anus was the divulging of confidential words. His feet were the murder of love. The small hair on his body was misfortunes. His body was huge. He was fierce. His complexion was dark. His eyes were tawny. He gave great pain to those who sought his shelter.

13-14. Seeing that Man of Sin, the best among men (but) very fierce, the kind lord who removes the affliction of his creation (i.e. mankind), thought: 'For curbing my creation, I have created this wicked man, cruel and giving affliction to those that resort to him. (Now) I shall create the means (to control him)'.

15-16. Then lord Viṣṇu himself became Yama. He created hells like Raurava that gave affliction to the sinners. A fool who commits a sin does not go to the highest position. By Yama's order he would go to a hell like Raurava.

17. Once lord Viṣṇu, who removes the affliction of the created beings, mounted upon Garuḍa and went to Yama's abode.

18. The Sun's son, on seeing Anāmaya Viṣṇu, the lord of the worlds, was pleased in mind, and worshipped him with incense etc.

19. Viṣṇu, the only chief of all the worlds, honoured by Yama, sat on a seat made of gold, O best brāhmaṇa.

20. The lord, the killer of demons, seated there, heard crying, meditation (dhyānaṁ?), in the southern direction, O lord.

21. Then that lord of Lakṣmī, with his mind full of amazement, said to Yama: "Wherefrom is this sound of their crying (coming)?"

Yama said:

22-23. O god, sinful mortals sink in the hell giving great affliction, in my abode due to sins committed by their own hands. O Viṣṇu, it is extremely painful to eat the fruit of the tree of sins. Therefore, the sinners are crying. This big noise is theirs.

24-25. Thus told by the Sun's son, Kṛṣṇa, having lotus-like eyes, suddenly went where they were crying. Then the lord, the master, seeing those sinful mortals living in Raurava etc. had pity produced in his heart and thought:

26. 'I have created all these living beings in accordance with the fault in their acts. In spite of my presence they sink in hell, giving great distress.'

27. O best brāhmaṇa, thinking this and something else, he, full of pity, himself suddenly became the day of Ekādaśī.

28-30. Then he made it well-known to all the sinners. All of them, with their sins dropped went to the highest abode. Therefore, know Ekādaśī to be the embodiment of Viṣṇu, the highest soul. He made the Ekādaśī day, as the best of all vows, the best one (removing) all misdeeds, and as one purifying the three worlds. The Man of Sin, being afraid, went to Viṣṇu to praise him.

31. Then, O brāhmaṇa, that Man of Sin, devoutly joining the palms of his hands, praised lord Viṣṇu, the lord of Lakṣmī.

32. Hearing his hymn of praise the lord was pleased. He said: "I am pleased. Tell me what you desire."

The Man of Sin said:

33-34. O Viṣṇu, you, the lord, have created me, giving distress (to beings) by obliging them. Due to the power of Ekādaśī, I am perishing now. When I die, all the sentient beings will be free from the bonds of the worldly existence.

35-42. O lord, when all the best sentient beings will be freed, with whom will you sport in this play-house in the form of the worldly existence? O Viṣṇu, if you have a desire to sport in the play-house in the form of the world, then protect me from the fear of the Ekādaśī day. I cannot be killed by thousands of other (kinds of) religious merit. The meritorious Ekādaśī (alone) can kill me. Grant me a boon. For me who ran away through the fear of Ekādaśī, I do not find any place free from fear among men, insects, other living beings, on mountains, trees, dry grounds, in water, rivers, seas, forests, on desolate roads, in heaven, on the earth, in the nether world, (or) among gods, gandharvas, birds. O god of gods, O eternal one, due to this Ekādaśī day I am not getting a place to stay in the crores of universes. O lord, O lord

of gods, tell me where I shall live without fear on the Ekādaśī (day). You have created me without a purpose.

Vyāsa said:

43-44. The Man of Sin spoke like this to Viṣṇu who removes affliction. He, with tears in his eyes, fell down on the ground and wept. Then the lord, the destroyer of Madhu and Kaiṭabha, laughed and said to the Man of Sin who was alarmed through the fear of Ekādaśī:

The lord said:

45-47. O Man of Sin, give up your grief. Be joyful. I shall tell you where you will have your place on the Ekādaśī day. O Man of Sin, when Ekādaśī, the purifier of the three worlds, arrives, you should resort to food. This Ekādaśī day, my embodiment, will not kill you, the Man of Sin, who have taken shetler inside food.

48-49. Then, O brāhmaṇa sage, the god also disappeared there only. The Man of Sin, being satisfied, went as he had come. Therefore, those best ones who desire their welfare should never eat food when the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, has come.

50-52. By the order of glorious Viṣṇu all the sins that are there in the world, save themselves by resorting to food on the Ekādaśī day. (Even) those committing all (kinds of) sins would be discharged from hell. But those who eat food even on this day should be known to be the greatest sinners (and have no requittal). Repeatedly I am telling firmly. O people, listen, listen. Never, never eat food (on the Ekādaśī day).

53-56. O best brāhmaṇa, all brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, śūdras and others should observe the Ekādaśī (vow), which gives (the fruit of) the four goals of human life. The wise say that a *kāṣṭhā* is formed by eighteen *nimeṣas*. Those who know everything say that a *kalā* is formed by thirty *kāṣṭhās*. A *kṣaṇa* is formed by thirty *kalās*, and a *muhūrta* by twelve *kṣaṇas*. The day and night of people is declared to be of thirty *muhūrtas*. O best brāhmaṇa, a fortnight should be known (to be formed) by those fifteen (days). A month is formed by the two fortnights—the bright and the dark.

57-58a. O best brāhmaṇa, he who, even having committed great sins, observes the Ekādaśī (vow) in both the bright and dark halves in the month, would, after being freed from all sins, obtain Viṣṇu's world.

58b-62. A mother is not said to be mother. The mother is the Ekādaśī day. A mother would look after (one) in this world only. But the Ekādaśī day (looks after one) everywhere. That dull person who, abandoning the Ekādaśī vow observes another vow, takes up a clod after giving up a gem in his hand. Those who, full of devotion, have observed the Ekādaśī vow, have performed all sacrifices, and have observed all vows. Viṣṇu is always angry with those sinful men who, through folly, eat (food) on the Ekādaśī of the bright half or of the dark half (of a month). He, who has fasted on the Ekādaśī day has performed all religious rites.

63-71. As Viṣṇu is declared to be the greatest of all gods, so is the Ekādaśī vow the greatest of all vows. As the Sun is (said to be the greatest) among Ādityas, as the Moon is (said to be the greatest) among the constellations, so the vow of Ekādaśī is said to be the greatest of all vows. As the holy fig tree is declared (to be the greatest) of all trees, as the Sāma (Veda) is (declared to be the greatest) of all Vedas, so is the Ekādaśī vow said to be the greatest of all vows. As Uśanas (i.e. Śukrācārya) is (said to be the greatest) of (all) thinkers, as brāhmaṇa is (said to be the best) among castes, so is the Ekādaśī vow said to be the greatest of all vows. Among the sages Vyāsa is the greatest. Nārada is the greatest among the divine sages. Similarly the Ekādaśī vow is the greatest of all vows. As the gift of food is said to be the best of all gifts, similarly the Ekādaśī vow is said to be the greatest of all vows. As there is no friend like religious merit, as there is no teacher like the holy texts, similarly there is no vow comparable to the Ekādaśī vow in the three worlds. As the wise have declared mind to be the greatest of the senses, the month of Kārtika to be the greatest among the months, Arjuna to be the greatest of the Pāṇḍavas, as the Vedas are declared to be the greatest of all holy texts, so is the Ekādaśī vow said to be the best among vows.

72-74. O brāhmaṇa, the wise have not declared any other vow equal to the Ekādaśī vow in the Vedas, scriptures, Purāṇas

and other holy texts. Having observed the Ekādaśī vow all men remain without fear on the earth. What will (Yama), the Sun's son, do (to them)? Yama is the servant of those who properly observe (even) one Ekādaśī. Therefore, one should observe the Ekādaśī vow, giving happiness.

75. I am telling you in brief the manner of (observing) the Ekādaśī vow. O best one, O Jaimini, being of (i.e. with) an attentive mind listen (to it).

76-81. Having got up in the morning on the tenth (day) a man should brush his teeth. Then he should bathe without (smearing his body with) oil and (remain) without food. Then having worshipped Viṣṇu by offering water for washing his feet etc., he should, being highly devoted to the meditation of Viṣṇu, take one meal (only). On the tenth he should avoid (eating) flesh, salt, meat, pulses, big beans, so also vegetables. On the tenth he should avoid eating twice, the food of another (man), spirituous liquors, sexual union, so also taking food from vessels of bell-metal. On the tenth he should avoid nimba-leaf, egg-plant-fruit, and dry citron, so also milk without ghee. On the tenth he should avoid eating too much, very much enjoying and eating food and tāmbūla.

82. O best brāhmaṇa, just those articles which are prohibited on the tenth are also undoubtedly prohibited on the twelfth.

83. O best brāhmaṇa, a devotee of Viṣṇu desiring the proper fruit of his vow should not eat at night on the tenth, so also on the twelfth.

84. Therefore, he who observes a vow, having quickly eaten food proper for a fast should, in the proper manner, brush his teeth in the afternoon on the tenth.

85-87. In the evening, having gone to (Viṣṇu's) temple with a handful of flowers, he, meditating mentally upon Viṣṇu, should utter this prayer: 'O Govinda, I have taken up this vow before you. By the grace of your feet, may it reach its completion without any obstacle. Can I, a man of a very fickle mind, full of greed and delusion, observe it without your favour?'

88-93. Having recited these two hymns, and having offered just that handful of flowers to Viṣṇu, he should salute (Viṣṇu) prostrating himself like a staff on the ground. In that very abode of Viṣṇu, he, engaged in remembering Viṣṇu, should sleep on the

ground after covering his bed with kuśa (grass). Then when it is the bright morning, he should not brush his teeth. The wise one should clean his mouth with twelve mouthfuls of water. He should (then) perform his daily rites like Viṣṇu's worship etc. Then, O best brāhmaṇa, at night, he should, together with all other men observing the vow, keep awake in front of the lord of worlds. O best brāhmaṇa, he who observes the vow for a long time along with his mother, wife, brother or also his father, his son, friend, and who would keep awake before Viṣṇu, would dwell in Viṣṇu's abode.

94. Viṣṇu would take away the sin of (i.e. committed by) him during many existences, who would draw the picture of a conch, or a disc etc. in Viṣṇu's temple.

95-100. Listen to the fruit of (i.e. obtained by) him who would draw in Viṣṇu's temple a picture with the paste of rice-powder or with other sylvan materials. He enjoys all auspicious (things) along with his sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons. And afterwards, he, going to Viṣṇu's abode, would get liberation there. A man hoisting a flag on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Lakṣmī's lord, would go to Viṣṇu's city after emancipating crores of men. That man who would decorate Viṣṇu's temple with lines of banners would be a king in every birth. As soon as the banner moves due to breezes all the sin of the maker of it perishes just then. Wise men desiring the highest position, should put up the lines of banners of various colours in Viṣṇu's temple on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu.

101-105. O brāhmaṇa sage, that man who holds a very beautiful umbrella over Viṣṇu's head, becomes (i.e. is born as) a kṣatriya in every existence on the earth. He who, on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, prepares a pavilion of flowers, would obtain for every flower the religious merit due to more than a hundred horse-sacrifices. A wise man should even with effort prepare a pavilion with flowers on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu in order to obtain (the fruit of) the four goals of human life. He who makes an abode of cloth (i.e. a tent) on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, lives in a mansion in heaven, O brāhmaṇa sage. Having fashioned an abode of cloth, a man, dear to Viṣṇu, (or to whom Viṣṇu is dear), ties there a white, or red or black (piece of) cloth.

106. The observer of the vow should devoutly install there

a śālagrāma stone or idol of the lord of Lakṣmī after bathing it with pañcāmṛta.

107. A wise man should first perform, even with effort the *svastyayana* (recitation of mantras for averting evil) and then declare the purpose in order to obtain (the fruit of) the four goals of human life.

108. Having performed one's *bhūtaśuddhi* (the removal of ghosts from oneself) in accordance with the formality prescribed by scriptures he should take with a concentrated mind an excellent flower.

109-110. He should meditate upon Viṣṇu residing in the lotus of his heart, seated on a golden seat and on a jewelled one. "Constantly looking from the corners of my eyes at him, seated on a golden seat, adorned with fire-like (bright) gems, having donned a sporting attire, having a beautiful body like the sky, having the digit (of the moon), always shining with the four arms holding weapons, looking with his lotus-like eyes at Lakṣmī's face that removes his fatigue, I worship him.

111-123. O lord, O lord of Lakṣmī, O dear one, come along with the gods. In this vow I have to worship you with devotion. O you endowed with all good characteristics, O lord of the world, remain with Lakṣmī on this excellent seat till I worship you. O you whose fame is well-known in all the worlds, O Nārāyaṇa, O lord, I hope you are quite all right. Tell me all that, O you who are worshipped by the gods. O lord of gods, O Nārāyaṇa, accept the fragrant water for washing your feet. It will remove the dust-particles from both your feet; it is pure and very cold. O Viṣṇu, I offer you materials of worship along with dūrvā grass. It is along with unbroken rice grains, O you whose eyes resemble lotuses. I am offering you this very pure water for sipping. O you highest joy, accept it which enhances great joy. O you destroyer of Jarāsandha, O you lord of Lakṣmī, may your body be decorated with the fragrant sandal offered by me. O god, O lord of gods, to you the first cause of the worlds I am offering this water for sipping, for purifying. (Please) accept it. For increasing the joy of the god, this incense was formerly created by Brahmā. Therefore, I offer it to you, O greatest among gods. O Janārdana, O god, may this lamp, full of ghee, and destroyer of the mass of darkness, please you. This garment along with the upper one will very well

decorate your abdomen and hips. O lord of gods, O master of the world, I am giving it to you along with the sacred thread. O highest god, I have devoutly offered to you four kinds of food having six agreeable tastes. (Please) accept it. O Viṣṇu, O you very intelligent one, accept this tāmbūla removing the bad odour of the mouth, with (i.e. containing) camphor and khadira, and giving beatitude".

124-126. Full of devotion he should in this way worship Viṣṇu with excellent offerings in (all) the four watches (of the day). He who would offer various offerings on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu should not show guile about wealth if he desires the fruit of his acts. Then all the observers of the vow, highly devoted to Viṣṇu, should keep awake at night while dancing, singing and eulogizing etc.

127. O best brāhmaṇa, those who are engaged in the vow, should remember Viṣṇu's names destroying all sins, while going round (the image of Viṣṇu) keeping it to their right.

128. Those who hear the sound of Viṣṇu's name coming from every mouth would be free from great heaps of sins.

129. On the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu one should not talk to heretics. Due to a mere talk with heretics (one's) entire religious merit perishes.

130. Fools are not pleased on hearing the song of Viṣṇu's glory which comes out from every mouth, as dogs are not pleased on hearing the sound of a lute.

131. The good ones are pleased on hearing the song about the lord of the world, which destroys all sins, as the deer are pleased on hearing the sound of a lute.

132-134. They sing songs about Viṣṇu. They dance an excellent dance. They are pleased on seeing the observers of Viṣṇu's vow. They are pleased with what the observers of Viṣṇu's vow are pleased with in the temple of Viṣṇu, O brāhmaṇa. Those observers of (Viṣṇu's) vow who do not sing on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, attain beasthood eternally in every existence. They, without (the power of uttering) words (i.e. being dumb) roam in every existence.

135. Musical instruments like tabor should be beaten in front of (the image of) Viṣṇu, since lord Viṣṇu would be pleased with (the sound of) musical instruments.

136. The devotees of Viṣṇu keeping awake (in front) of Viṣṇu study Vedas (in his temple) or recite a Purāṇa (in the temple).

137. On the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, Rāmāyaṇa, Bhāgavata, or Bhārata narrated by Vyāsa or other Purāṇas should be read.

138. Those who read (these) before (the image of) Viṣṇu and those who listen to them on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, obtain for every letter the fruit due to the gift of a tawny cow.

139. A devotee of Viṣṇu should joyfully keep awake at night. He should curb his sleep. He properly meditates upon Viṣṇu with his heart.

140-142. On the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, he should salute Viṣṇu by falling (i.e. prostrating himself) on the ground like a staff while going round (the image keeping it to his) right. Then the devout observer of the vow, after having performed the five great sacrifices in the bright morning, should bathe (the image of) Viṣṇu with milk and worship him. The observer of the vow should give a present according to his capacity to a brāhmaṇa. Then on the twelfth day he should break the fast.

143-147. The religious merit earned during crores of existences by him who breaks his fast after having observed a fast on the twelfth day, perishes. The wise ones, desiring the fruit of the vow, should break the fast on the twelfth day, and never on the thirteenth day. O brāhmaṇa, the devotee of Viṣṇu, desiring the fruit of the fast, should, with effort, avoid sleep even at night on the day of the fast. Without keeping awake the fast is useless. Therefore, (on the Ekādaśī days) in both the fortnights he should keep awake. O greatest brāhmaṇa, all those who observe the Ekādaśī vow in this manner truly go to (i.e. attain) liberation.

148. O Jaimini, even hosts of gods like Indra and others should observe this essence of the vow of the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, which is the only cause of avoiding birth and death. You also observe it carefully.

CHAPTER TWENTYTHREE

Queen Suprajñā on the Efficacy of Ekādaśī Vow

Vyāsa said:

1-2. Formerly on the earth there was a king named Kocaraśa. He was calm. He knew the excellent ways of life. He was the best among those who know statesmanship. He, the great one, spoke the truth. He had conquered his anger. He had vanquished the multitude of his enemies. He was very much devoted to Nārāyaṇa's worship. He was engrossed in the service of Hari.

3-4. His queen was Suprajñā by name, who spoke pleasing words, was endowed with all (good) characteristics, and was absorbed in serving her husband. She was engaged in (observing) the Ekādaśī vow, and desired the good of all living beings. She remembered her (past) births. She was noble and of an excellent complexion.

5-6. That king who knew the highest truth, having observed the Daśamī (vow), was along with his wife engrossed in keeping awake at night on the Ekādaśī day. In the meantime a certain brāhmaṇa named Śauri, who was very lustrous, came to the king's pavilion where people kept awake.

7-8. The king, highly devoted to Viṣṇu, seeing him coming, was highly delighted and honoured him by offering him water for washing his feet etc. The brāhmaṇa, knowing the entire truth, and comfortably seated among them, saw there many observers (of the Ekādaśī vow) engaged in Viṣṇu's worship.

9-14. Some worshipped Viṣṇu with many lovely flowers, sandal, incense, lamps and excellent presents. Some observers of the vow decorated with the clay from Gaṅgā, and adorned with garlands of tulasī leaves, gladly danced in front of (the image of) Viṣṇu. (Some) observers of the vow, dear to the lord, sang, keeping rhythm with clapping their hands, charming songs about Viṣṇu. Some (others) praised Anāmaya, Viṣṇu, the lord of the worlds, with excellent hymns having divine meanings and containing pleasing letters. Some fanned (the image of) Viṣṇu, the lord of the world, with white chowries to his great delight. Some played upon the charming, pure, auspicious musical instruments

like the lute. Some noble ones sang (songs) to (i.e. in honour of) Viṣṇu.

15-16. The two—the king and the queen—being very much delighted, sang a charming song, and danced an excellent dance. That best brāhmaṇa, Śauri, spoke with gentle words to the noble couple, dancing and singing:

Śauri said:

17-20. O king, you are fortunate, so also is your queen fortunate. This auspicious behaviour of you two is difficult to be found on the earth. I shall speak something to you, since I have not seen an excellent devotee of Viṣṇu (like you). There is no doubt that the earth, with you as the king, is blessed. O king, along with your wife you are observing this pure Ekādaśī vow, dear to the lord. Therefore, you are the chief among Viṣṇu's devotees, since, O best king, you, the only lord of (the earth with) the seven islands, are, along with your wife, joyfully dancing and singing before (the image of) Viṣṇu.

21. This behaviour of you, the couple, is seen to be wonderful. For what reason such an extremely pure thought has arisen in (the mind of) you?

Vyāsa said:

22. Having heard these words of that brāhmaṇa, Śauri, Suprajñā, with a face having a slight smile on it, spoke to the brāhmaṇa:

Suprajñā said:

23-24. O best brāhmaṇa, we two, very great sinners, were formerly freed by the noble (Yama), the son of the Sun, due to the efficacy of the Ekādaśī (vow). O best brāhmaṇa, due to (my) power of recollecting (the past) existences, we two are now observing this divine Ekādaśī vow with a desire for (reaching) the highest place.

Śauri said:

25-26. O beautiful lady, if you know your former birth, then tell me (about it). In my heart a great curiosity is produced

to listen to it. Who were you formerly? Who was your husband? How was it that you, though sinners, were released by Yama?

Suprajñā said:

27-28. Though these words are not to be divulged (I shall tell you), O best brāhmaṇa. I, proficient in the science of love, was the chief prostitute. O best brāhmaṇa, in that existence, I committed very many fearful sins, giving torment in hell.

29-30. This (king) was a śūdra named Nityodaya, who had given up the practices of his own (caste), who, the cruel one, kidnapped other's wives and snatched other's wealth. He drank liquor, killed his friends, caused abortions, harmed others, was very proud, and always censured the prescribed course of conduct.

31-33. Once he, abandoned by all his kinsmen of good vows, and longing for the amorous movements of prostitutes, came to my house. O best brāhmaṇa, seeing this handsome youth, I too, having love for him, pleased him with sexual unions (with him). Then, O you rich in penance, he, having had sexual union with me, being humble with modesty, spoke to me (these) words with love:

34. "I am proficient in the science of sexual union. I am abandoned by my relatives. If you agree about it (i.e. the sexual union), then I shall stay here with you."

35-40. Hearing these polite words, O brāhmaṇa, I forming the relation of a couple, stayed with him. O best brāhmaṇa, once on a day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, I was tormented by major (diseases) harming the body. On that (day) only, O best brāhmaṇa, I, with my body dull by fever, did not drink water, nor did I eat food due to great fear. This one, in whom love for me was begotten, abandoned food and water on the same day, and was as it were unhappy with existence. Then, O best brāhmaṇa, I, with my mind smitten with fever, burnt a lamp with ghee, and kept awake. He too, repeatedly saying, 'Nārāyaṇa, Hari, Kṛṣṇa,' kept awake during the night.

41. O brāhmaṇa, due to the efficacy of the fast, and the utterance of (the name) Keśava, all our sin perished.

42-43. Then, O best brāhmaṇa, when the morning dawned,

and the sun rose, I, oppressed by fever, expired. Then he, seeing me dead, and censured by all people, resorted to death with me.

44-45. Then we two, after being bound with a strong noose by the servants of Yama, whose eyes were like blazing fire, were taken (to him) along a difficult path. That wise Citragupta considered, from the beginning, all our good and evil acts by Yama's order.

Citragupta said:

46-49. O you large-armed one, even though these two are the greatest sinners, yet they are freed from sins due to their fasting on the Ekādaśī day. Even he who would observe the meritorious Ekādaśī vow unintentionally would, being free from all sins, go to the highest place.

The very glorious Dharmarāja, thus addressed by Citragupta, suddenly rose from his seat, and saluted her and him. The two, free from sins, were adorned with fragrant sandal, divine incense, and flowers, so also with golden ornaments by Yama.

50-51. Then the Sun's son affectionately fed us with various kinds of fruits, sweet and resembling nectar. Then lord Yama himself praised us with divine eulogies and having put us in a divine chariot said to us with the palms of his hands joined:

Yama said:

52. You are the greatest among the meritorious. You are free from sins. Now go there where Viṣṇu dwells.

53-54. When we two were thus addressed by Yama, humble with modesty, we, bowing at his lotus-like feet, said to him: "O god, we would not go anywhere (else). (We would go to) the highest position of Viṣṇu. But we have a desire to see the hell situated in your dwelling."

55. Then, O brāhmaṇa, by Yama's order we two got into a beautiful chariot and we two saw there extensive hells, difficult to be seen.

The brāhmaṇa said:

56-58. O you chaste lady, please tell (me) in detail all the

conditions of the sinners which you saw there. O you beautiful lady, tell me in detail by which path the meritorious ones go to Yama's house, and by which way the sinners go. How would a pious soul see there lord Yama and the paths of the pious and of the sinners, giving pleasure and pain (respectively)?

Suprajñā said:

59-64. I shall first describe the path of the pious men, which increases the pleasure of the meritorious. O best brāhmaṇa, listen. The path of the pious, built with big stones and covered with divine pieces of cloth, appears to be free from all troubles. At places wonderful songs are sung by gandharva-maidens. At places celestial nymphs of beautiful bodies dance. At places they produce the sound of the lute and the charming (sound) of various musical instruments. At places there is a shower of flowers; at places cold breezes blow. At places there are stalls where water is distributed to travellers, at places there are houses for eating. At places god and gandharvas recite excellent eulogies. At places there are very beautiful lakes with fully bloomed lotuses. At places there are very shady trees like blossomed aśoka trees.

65-73. From there, O best brāhmaṇa, the pious men endowed with happiness, and meeting with a happy death, go along the path. Some are mounted on horses; some are decorated with various ornaments. They go covering their heads with white umbrellas with their handles raised. Some mounted on elephants, some mounted on chariots, some having got into vehicles, happily go to Yama's abode. Some men, fanned with breezes from the chowries placed in the hands of divine ladies, and praised by great sages, go (to Yama's abode). Certain pious men, holding divine weapons, adorned with garlands and sandal and eating tāmbūla go to Yama's abode. Some living in houses built near water, blazing the ten quarters with the lustre of their bodies go to Yama's abode. O best one, certain (men), enjoying rice boiled in milk, and eating well go happily to Yama's abode. Some drinking milk, some drinking sugarcane juice, also some drinking butter-milk go to Yama's abode. Some meritorious ones eating curd, some eating various fruits, some drinking spirituous liquor go (to Yama's abode).

74-76. Seeing many (such) pious men, securing Yama's

love and coming there, Viṣṇu would himself appear there. He has four arms; his complexion is dark; his eyes are like full-blown lotuses. He holds a conch, a disc, a mace and a lotus. His vehicle is Garuḍa. His sacred thread is golden. His great face is lovely like that of Cupid. He puts on a crown and ear-rings. He is adorned with a garland of wood flowers.

77-79. All like the very wise Citragupta, Yama's servants like Caṇḍa, speaking sweetly have the forms of Viṣṇu. O brāhmaṇa, then Yama himself, having great affection, would worship all those excellent men. Having (honoured) the pious men with divine gems (and) fed them fruits the Sun's son (i.e. Yama) said:

Yama said:

80-81. O you noble ones afraid of the torment in the hell, you (will) go to the highest position due to the efficacy of your acts. The man who, being born in the world, does (acts of) merit, is my father, my brother, and is my friend and like my kinsmen.

82. O best brāhmaṇa, all those, thus addressed by Yama, got into a divine chariot and went to Viṣṇu's city.

83-98. O best brāhmaṇa, I have told you in brief (about) the fate of the meritorious. Listen to the fate of sinners. I shall tell it in detail. The expanse of the path, full of all afflictions, of the wicked ones, is said to be eighty-six thousand yojanas. At places there is a shower of fire. At places there is a shower of stones, and O best brāhmaṇa, at places there is hot sand. At places there are sharp stones. At places there are hot stones. At places there is a shower of weapons. At places there is a shower of burning charcoals. At places breezes, very hot like fire, blow. At places are deep places of darkness with their openings covered with grass, O brāhmaṇa. At places there is a shower of thorns, along with thorny arrows. At places there are rows of rocks, difficult to climb, along with serpents. The sinners, with their throats and palates parched up, go there. O best brāhmaṇa, the unhappy sinners go along that path full of various kinds of sufferings and without shade or water. The sinners named Vimuktakeśa, some of the form of goblins, fierce, wet with steams

of blood, some adorned (i.e. smeared) with mud, some with dark bodies, go along the path. Some sinners waiting with agony, some with their eyes full of tears that are trickling, some repenting for their deeds, go along the path. Round the neck of some sinner a hide-noose is tied. (Chains) are bound round someone's skeleton and someone's both feet. Yama's servants, angrily putting a noose round the sinners' necks pierced with needles, drag them. The sinners carrying in the cavities of their ears heavy stones lying on the path, and (carrying) iron-loads on the tops of their heads, go along the path. Yama's servants take some sinners after putting nooses round their arms and (after keeping) strong weapons on their necks. By tossing the sinners Yama's servants take them. Some walk with their heads down, and some with their feet up. Some walk on their hands; some walk on one foot. Thus they are deformed, and cry piteously.

99-102. The sinners, being beaten by Yama's messengers go along that path. When they had come, evil-minded Yama, angrily gave up his divine form and became very fierce. His body was thirty yojanas long, and his eyes resembled wells. His complexion was smoky. He was very lustrous. He was prominent. His sound was gurgling. He had rows of very long teeth. His rows of nails resembled winnowing baskets. He was mounted on a strong he-buffalo. He bit his lips. He had a staff in his hand. He had a noose of hide. His face had curved eyebrows.

103. With him shone Citragupta who had great illusory power, whose eyes were red due to anger, and who was laughing loudly.

104-105. All (Yama's) servants, with nooses and mallets in their hands, who were fierce and angry, thundered like clouds. Yama's servants, running from every side said boastfully: "Quickly kill the most sinful ones. Break them, cut them, pierce them."

106. Lord Yama threatened all the sinners that were running, giving out a 'hum' sound with these words:

Yama said:

107-113a. O sinners, O wicked ones, you thoughtless ones have committed sins which trouble yourselves. You do not see me remaining over your heads. Even knowing me, the lord of life,

(to be observing your deeds), you committed sins. Nowhere have you heard with your own ears that I am the brother of the meritorious and the enemy of sinners. Hells are unbearable; they are full of various afflictions. The sinners experience them (i.e. undergo tortures there). Have you not heard this? O you wicked-hearted ones, you regarded my inquiry to be just untrue. O you who have committed sins, today see it with your own eyes. In the blindness due to wealth, all of you being insolent, never followed my words. You always committed heaps of sins. In accordance with that (heap of sins), O wicked ones, experience the fruit of your sins. What is the use of crying?

Suprajñā said:

113b-116a. Speaking (to them) like this, Yama said to Citragupta: "O you noble one, take into account the sinful deeds of these."

Hearing those great words of Yama, Citragupta being (thus) directed (by Yama) told as many sins of them (as they had committed). Then, O best brāhmaṇa, all the sinners waited. They, who were frightened, and who were controlled with a noose of hide (said):

The sinners said:

116b-119a. O Sun's son, who were the witness presented by you to the sins which we had committed. Tell us who witnessed the good or evil deeds that we did formerly.

Then, O brāhmaṇa, Yama having laughed spoke these words very angrily after summoning all the witnesses:

Yama said:

119b-120. You were all nearby and witnesses to whatever took place. The sky, the earth, so also the water, the dates, the day, the night, both the twilights and Dharma—these are the witnesses.

121-122. They narrated all the good and evil deeds of the sinners, and the deed of each one of them and the time when it was done. Each witness told (the deeds) in Yama's presence.

Hearing them, the minds of all sinners were overpowered by fright.

123-125a. They stood with their hearts trembling as deer (remain) on seeing a cloud. Then making a 'Kaḍa Kaḍa' sound with the rows of his teeth (i.e. gnawing his teeth), Yama separately struck them with his fatal staff. All those sinners, struck separately by Dharmarāja (i.e. Yama) wailed over their deeds and being alarmed lamented.

125b-132. Then, Caṇḍa and others, the messengers of Yama, threw, by Yama's order, all those sinners into hells. They dropped some sinners into (the hell called) Tapana, and some into (the hell called) Avīci. (They threw others) into Saṁghāta, Kālasūtra, Mahāraurava, into a hot basin containing sand, and into Kumbhīpāka. They threw the sinners into (hells like) Pramardana which was breathless (i.e. where breathing was not possible) and which was very fierce; so also in the fearful (hell called) Asipatravana, and into (hells) containing various kinds of foods. Certain servants of Yama similarly threw (some) sinners into Vaitaraṇā. Yama's servants threw some sinners into a fierce pool of feces; some (sinners) into (a hell) full of thorns along with bones and chaff-fire, and extremely hot; so also Yama's servants threw them into hells where smearing was done with feces, where the foods was feces, so also in the hell where one's own flesh was eaten. Some (sinners) ate phlegm; some drank semen. Some sinners drank urine; some drank blood. In the mouths of some were leeches, resembling serpents.

133-151. Some (hells) were filled with serpents by the fierce messengers of Yama. O best brāhmaṇa, the very angry (servants of Yama) extracted the tongues of some (sinners). The cruel servants of Yama filled (i.e. put) heated oil into the cavities of the ears and into the mouths of some. They cut off with the edges of swords (i.e. with sharp swords) a hand and a foot also, so also ears and noses of some wicked ones. Some slept on the heap of burning charcoals; some on thorns resembling arrows. O best brāhmaṇa, Yama's servants pulled out the hair of sinners and threw them into hot mud. They repeatedly inserted thousands of heated needles into the mouths and joints of nails of certain sinners. They put certain (sinners) on the tip of a heated pike. With sharp thorns they hurt the heads of some (sinners). (Yama's

servants) seized some sinners crying piteously by their hands and feet, and cut them asunder with the thorns of śālmali trees. Yama's servants, after tying a stone round the necks (of the sinners) repeatedly threw some into ditches full of blood and into ditches full of pus. The messengers of Yama devoured the heads of the sinners. They angrily again and again crushed them with stones. They put into the chests of the wicked ones who were crying, masses of iron nails. The eyes of certain sinners were extracted with hooks. O brāhmaṇa, the noses of some were filled with scorpions. Yama's servants tied the feet of some with ropes to the branch of a tree and burnt fire with smoke at the root (of the tree). There the sinners inhaled smoke. They remained there with their faces down and feet up as long as the moon and stars (shine in the sky). Some (sinners), being repeatedly beaten with pestles and mallets by Yama's messengers, and overcome by agony, vomitted blood, Certain sinners sank into an abode full of darkness and having the odour of pus, along with gad-flies and gnats. Some ate ash; some ate insects. Some ate ill-smelling flesh, and some earth with pus. Some, being eaten by dogs, tigers, jackals and hogs, so also by bears, and wet with blood, wail(ed). Some others were being eaten by serpents with extremely strong poison. O brāhmaṇa, the chests of others were being torn asunder by the horns of he-buffaloes.

152-161. Sprinkling the ground with their blood, they fell in a swoon on the earth. With their entire bodies shattered with arrows, resembling snakes, which (arrows) were discharged from the bows of Yama's servants, others rolled on the ground. They (crush) a mass of heated iron balls and a heated stone with a cutting weapon into their mouths. Yama's messengers sewed the nostrils and mouths of some in order to suppress breath. The arrogant, very strong servants of Yama, pulled out, with Yama's sharp-edged (weapons called) Śakti, the skin of the bodies of some. They seized some by their hair, and dropped them on the ground. They always struck (the sinners) with weapons and (their) feet etc. Some sinners were tormented with streams of saline water. O brāhmaṇa, they wailing in various ways, drank saline water. Certain sinners drank bile, O noble one. Some great sinners drank the mucus resembling thick milk flowing from the nose. Yama's servants placed on the chests of some lying on the

ground, big, heated stones, resembling mountains. They tied with strong cords the faces of some turned upwards, after putting a pair of logs at their necks and into their throats. They dropped some on the ground after placing them on the branch of a tree.

162-167. They raised them and again and again threw them on the ground. In this way all the sinners, hungry and thirsty, and murmuring 'save me, save me' cried in the abode of torment (i.e. in hell). Having, till the end of the yuga experienced torment in hell, and having not experienced (the fruit of) the remaining sins, they are born in sinful stocks. They, born in sin ful stocks, are troubled by diseases. They are defective in a limb, or have an excess limb. They are unhappy and resort to sins. They are sonless. They are great fools. They are absorbed in harming others. They have a short (span of) life. They are dull. They are the husbands of bad wives. Everyday they do sinful acts through (physical) deeds, mind and words. Again as a result of their sins they go to hell as before. Therefore, the best ones should never commit a sin.

168-175a. Men who have committed sins, cannot escape from hell. O best brāhmaṇa, I have explained to you in brief the affliction of sinners. Who is able to describe it properly even with hundreds of myriads of years? Then, having observed the sinners with a bad plight, we, getting into an aeroplane, went to Viṣṇu's city. Having enjoyed pleasures in Viṣṇu's house for thousands of crores of kalpas, we were born in this very pure royal family, O best brāhmaṇa. Having enjoyed here (i.e. in this existence) all pleasures with all affluence, O best brāhmaṇa, we had a happy (i.e. peaceful) death, and we would go to the highest place. In the three worlds, there is no (other) vow like the Ekādaśī vow. Such is our mode of existence even after our having observed the vow unintentionally. I do not know what would happen to them, through Viṣṇu's grace, who observe the Ekādaśī vow with devotion. O best brāhmaṇa, I have thus told you all that (you) had asked (me) about the importance of the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu. What else do you want to listen to?

Vyāsa said:

175b-178. Hearing these words of him, the brāhmaṇa, knowing the highest truth, put his mind very firmly into (observ-

ing) the Ekādaśī vow. The king and the queen having, for a long time, enjoyed the earth, in the end went to Viṣṇu's city and obtained the highest position. Those who listen to or recite the importance of this king of vows are freed from the heaps of sins and obtain (a place) near Viṣṇu.

CHAPTER TWENTYFOUR

The Greatness of Tulasī and Dhātrī

Sūta said:

1-2. Jaimini, being very much pleased on hearing the fruit of the Ekādaśī (vow), spoke, with the palms of his hands joined, these (words) to lord Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana (i.e. Vyāsa): "Through your grace I have heard the greatness of god Viṣṇu. (Now) tell me about the greatness of tulasī which destroys the sins of the listeners."

Vyāsa said:

3-6. O brāhmaṇa, this revered tulasī should always be worshipped by all deities like Indra. It gives the fruit of the four goals of human life. To the good tulasī is difficult to be obtained in heaven, in the mortal world and in the nether world. Devotion to it secures the four goals of human life. O best one, at that place only where one tulasī-plant stands, all gods like Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva dwell. Always Keśava dwells in the middle of the leaf, Prajāpati at the tip of the leaf, and Śiva at the foot-stalk of the leaf of tulasī.

7-10. Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, so also Gāyatrī and Caṇḍikā, likewise all other wives of (other) gods dwell in the leaves of that (tulasī-plant). These, viz. Indra, Agni, Śamana, Nairṛti, so also Varuṇa, Vāyu and Kubera dwell in the branch of the tulasī-plant. All planets like the Sun, the Viśvedevas,[1]

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1. Viśvedevāḥ—Name of a particular group of deities ten in number and supposed to be sons of Viśvā; their names are: Vasu, Satya, Kratu, Dakṣa, Kāla, Kāma, Dhṛti, Kuru, Purūravas, and Mādravas.

Vasus,[1] all sages and all divine sages, so also all the holy places that are there in the crores of universes and on the earth, live by resorting to (i.e. in) the tulasī plant.

11-17. He who devoutly worships tulasī, has worshipped the holy places, so also all gods like Brahmā. Viṣṇu just at that moment destroys (the sin of) the murder of a brāhmaṇa remaining in the body of those who remove the masses of grass at the root of tulasī. O best brāhmaṇa, by sprinkling the tulasī plant with fragrant and cold water in summer a man would obtain eternal bliss. He who gives it moonlight or an umbrella, especially in summer, is freed from all sins. A man who would everyday sprinkle the tulasī plant with continuous streams in Vaiśākha obtains the fruit of a horse-sacrifice. He who would sprinkle the tulasī plant with water from the hand stretched out and hollowed also obtains heaven after being freed from all sins. O brāhmaṇa sage, in the house of that man who would sometime sprinkle the tulasī plant with milk, Lakṣmī is steady.

18-22. O brāhmaṇa sage, listen to the fruit of the merit of him who would smear the root of the tulasī plant with cowdung. For as many thousands of kalpas as the dust particles removed from there, he rejoices with Viṣṇu, O Jaimini. He who would place a lamp at the root of the tulasī plant at twilight, goes along with a crore (members) of his family to Viṣṇu's abode. Viṣṇu would always protect him who protects the tulasī plant from cows, dogs, asses, men and children. There is no doubt that he who devoutly plants a tulasī plant, obtains the highest liberation after death.

23. That best devout man who would see the tulasī plant in the morning uninterruptedly obtains the fruit of seeing Viṣṇu.

24. The life, strength, fame, wealth, progeny of one who would devoutly salute the tulasī plant, grow.

25. By remembering tulasī, all sin perishes. The diseases of men perish on just touching the tulasī (plant).

26-27. The sin in the body of him who eats the auspicious tulasī leaf, removing all sins, perishes at that moment (only).

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1. Vasavaḥ—Vasus are a class of deities. They are eight in number: Āpa, Dhruva, Soma, Dhara or Dhava, Anila, Anala, Pratyūṣa, and Prabhāsa.

In the body of the man who wears a rosary made of tulasī wood there is no sin. This is the truth that I tell.

28. There is no doubt that he who bears on his head the water dropped from the leaves of tulasī, obtains the religious merit due to a bath in Gaṅgā.

29. A man having devoutly worshipped the auspicious tulasī with dūrvās, sacred rice grains, flowers, offerings of eatables, would obtain the fruit of the worship (offered) to Viṣṇu.

30. O brāhmaṇas(?), what is the use of worshipping Viṣṇu's feet to him who has sometime worshipped revered tulasī, giving the highest nectar of piety, material welfare and sensual enjoyment, with offerings of eatables, flowers, excellent incense and ghee-lamps?

31. O brāhmaṇa, Viṣṇu is pleased with them who plant tulasī pleasing Viṣṇu and fit to be worshipped by gods, at places free from blemishes; and Mura's enemy, the lord of the three worlds, quickly gives them the highest position.

32. Whatever auspicious act—a sacrifice, a vow, honouring the dead ancestors, worship of Viṣṇu, giving gifts—and other auspicious act(s) that men perform at the blemishless root of tulasī—all those indeed become inexhaustible.

33. O best brāhmaṇa, all that pious act which a man does on the earth without tulasī, dear to Viṣṇu, becomes fruitless. The god of gods, the lotus-eyed one (i.e. Viṣṇu) is also not pleased.

34. A man who, with devotion, sees the auspicious, pure tulasī during pilgrimages, quickly gets the fruit of the pilgrimages through Viṣṇu's grace. This statement is very firm.

35-36. Ananta (i.e. Viṣṇu), the only lord of the world, abandoning fragrant flowers like mandāra, kunda, lotus, gladly accepts even dry tulasī full of virtues and the security for the destruction of sins. Hari (i.e. Viṣṇu) to whom tulasī is dear always snatches the wealth of those wicked men who, through ignorance, uproot a tulasī (plant) purifying like the nectar-giving creeping plant, and place it on the ground. This is the truth.

37. Viṣṇu quickly snatches the wealth of those men who always urinate or excrete or put dirt at the root of tulasī, the abode of gods, and thus collect sins.

38-42. "I am collecting (the leaves of) you for worshipping Viṣṇu. I am collecting (the leaves of) you since even with flowers like (those of) pārijāta, so also with sandal etc., put without you Viṣṇu is not satisfied. O holy one, without you every act is fruitless. Therefore, O goddess Tulasī, I am collecting (the leaves of) you. Grant me a boon. O leader of the world, pardon me that pain which is produced in your heart due to (your leaves) being plucked. O Tulasī I salute you." A devotee of Viṣṇu, joining the palms of his hands recites these two hymns and then clapping twice collects tulasī leaves in such a way that the tulasī branch does not shake, O best brāhmaṇa.

43. When at the time of plucking a leaf, a branch of goddess (Tulasī) would be broken, then anguish is produced in the heart of Viṣṇu, Tulasī's lord.

44. Viṣṇu, the destroyer of (the demons) Madhu and Kaiṭabha should be worshipped even with every old leaf fallen from the tip of a branch.

45. He who would worship lord Viṣṇu with tender tulasī leaves, quickly gets whatever he desires with (i.e. in) his heart.

Jaimini said:

46. O best brāhmaṇa, what (other) tree is like that of tulasī? I desire to know it. O son of Satyavatī, (please) tell it.

Vyāsa said:

47-51. O brāhmaṇa, as tulasī is always most dear to Viṣṇu, so is dhātrī, destroying all sins. O best brāhmaṇa, all those deities who dwell in the plant after having reached it, stay at the root of āmalakī. O best brāhmaṇa, holy places like Gaṅgā dwell just there where pure dhātrī, most dear to Viṣṇu, remains. That act, auspicious or inauspicious, which is done by men at the root of āmalakī, would certainly become inexhaustible, O brāhmaṇa. He who would worship Viṣṇu with pure, fresh leaves of dhātrī, is freed from mass of sins and secures absorption into Viṣṇu.

52-56. O Jaimini, that place where there would be neither dhātrī nor tulasī is impure. (A man) does not obtain the fruit of his act (performed there). All the (pious) acts done by him in his hermitage where the auspicious dhātrī or tulasī does not exist indeed become fruitless. O brāhmaṇa, (in the house) of

him, which is without dhātrī and tulasī, poverty and sin (remain) and by that Kali is pleased. The wise should look upon that place where there is neither tulasī nor dhātrī as a cremation ground, O best brāhmaṇa. All gods dwell there where dhātrī and tulasī exist. All sin exists there where there is neither a leaf of dhātrī nor of tulasī.

57-60. Viṣṇu, along with Lakṣmī, would remain by resorting to the body of the wise man who would wear a rosary of dhātrī-fruits. All deities live by resorting to the body of the intelligent man who would wear a garland of dhātrī wood. All the act, auspicious or inauspicious, which a man wearing a garland (i.e. rosary) of dhātrī fruits does, is said to be inexhaustible. The entire sin remaining in the body of that man knowing the entire nature of Brahman, who eats the dhātrī fruit, perishes.

61-63. O best brāhmaṇa, I (shall) tell (you) the greatness destroying all sins (of the man) who would wear a rosary of the dhātrī fruits. Listen (to it). Even if he by chance dies in a cremation ground, he obtains the religious merit due to a bath in Gaṅgā. There is no doubt about it. Seeing him, all sinners are instantly freed from very fierce heaps of sins, (committed) even during hundreds of crores of existences.

64-66. There is no doubt, O best brāhmaṇa, that he who everyday takes a lump of the dhātrī fruit would obtain religious merit everyday and store it. There is no doubt that he who harms the dhātrī tree, the resort of all gods, gives blows on the body of Viṣṇu. Dhātrī is full of all gods. It is especially dear to Viṣṇu. Even Brahmā cannot correctly describe its virtues.

67. That man who, having known the entire truth, has devotion for dhātrī and tulasī, enjoys all pleasures, and then in the end obtains liberation due to Viṣṇu's grace.

CHAPTER TWENTYFIVE

The Importance of Honouring a Guest

Jaimini said:

1. O glorious one, tell me in detail again about tulasī's greatness destroying sins, so also about the importance of honouring a guest.

Sūta said:

2. Then, O best brāhmaṇa, that very lustrous Vyāsa, started telling the greatness of tulasī, destroying the sins of the listeners.

Vyāsa said:

3-4. This tulasī, dear to the lord, is actually great Lakṣmī. Therefore, O Jaimini they do not recognise it as a tree. As a mortal always worships tulasī on the earth, so gods along with Indra worship it in heaven.

5-6. I am telling firmly that everything is prosperous there only where this tulasī, of the nature of the highest Brahman, stands. Even a sinner who gets, at the time of his death, water dropped from a leaf of tulasī, goes near Viṣṇu.

7. He who would have, at the time of his death, a vertical sectarian mark (*ūrdhvapuṇḍra*) is freed from all sins and goes to Viṣṇu.

8. O best brāhmaṇa, Yama is not the master of him who would have a tulasī leaf in his mouth, on his head or in his ears at the time of his death.

9-12a. There was a pious brāhmaṇa by name Pavitra, who knew the highest truth. His wife had the name Bahulā. The chaste lady belonged to a good family and was highly devoted to serving her husband. There (also) lived an excellent brāhmaṇa named Anapatyapati. That Pavitra, serving brāhmaṇas, formed friendship with him. Then, O best one, Pavitra, through love (for his friend) and with a desire to have talk, sat with Anapatyapati on an excellent seat.

12b-13a. In the meanwhile a good brāhmaṇa, of a great lustre, named Lomaśa, came there and saw the two telling (each other) wonderful stories.

13b-14a. Then the two brāhmaṇas, getting up from the seat, honoured that brāhmaṇa Lomaśa with water for washing his feet, with respectful offerings and water for rinsing his mouth.

14b-16a. That Lomaśa, highly devoted to Viṣṇu, was very much pleased with them, and narrating (tales of) Viṣṇu, sat on the seat, O best brāhmaṇa. The two sages, Pavitra and Anapatya, said devoutly to the magnanimous Lomaśa who had joined the palms of his hands:

16b-20a. "O revered one, O you who know all the worldly practices, indeed our hermitage is purified by the couple of your feet which are fit to be seized (i.e. touched) by the good. By seeing the couple of your feet, all the sins that we had formerly committed through delusion, have perished. You are actually lord Viṣṇu fit to be worshipped even by gods. How are we, men, able to worship you properly? With the worship that we have, according to our capacity, offered to you, our guest, be pleased. Pardon the faults of us two."

20bc. O best brāhmaṇa, speaking like this, the two high-souled friends, the two householders, fell at the couple of the feet of the guest.

Vyāsa said:

21-23. Then Lomaśa, best among the learned, was very much pleased. (He said to them:) "You are best among the polite, You are the best brāhmaṇas, and are highly devoted to piety. By your polite words I am very much pleased. The wise say that a guest is actually Brahmā, Śiva, or Viṣṇu. You have shown so much devotion to me. May auspiciousness come to you. I, a guest, have been properly entertained by you with abundant eatables."

Vyāsa said:

24. Then the two brāhmaṇas got up, and saluting him by touching the couple of his feet, said to that sage Lomaśa:

The two brāhmaṇas said:

25-26. O brāhmaṇa, please tell us the importance of the worship of a guest, having done which, liberation, to be obtained by men but with difficulty, is obtained. Who is said to be a guest

in the world? How is his worship (done)? What position do the one attentive to a guest and the guest obtain?

Lomaśa said:

27-28. Of the four stages of life that of the householder is said to be the best due to its honouring the anchorite, celibate and a religious mendicant. Among (the members of) the four stages of life the householders are said to be the chief. They should devoutly honour guests.

29-30. The greatest duty of householders is said to be honouring guests. They are said to be householders since they have not fallen from the duty of their stage of life. If householders take care in honouring guests, then what purpose do they have with other pious acts?

31-32. The wise call him to be a guest whose name, family and position are not heard of (before), and who would accidentally come to their house. The wise ones should honour like Viṣṇu brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras who have come to their house.

33-34. Those others born in low castes, among whom cāṇḍālas are the chief ones, should be honoured like Viṣṇu with water for washing their feet, with respectful offerings and abundant eatables. When guests come, a householder goes forth (to greet them). A brāhmaṇa should quickly give them water for washing their feet and materials of worship.

35. With soft words he would make a friendly enquiry after the (guests') health. And the householder should gladly feed them with divine foods.

36. The wise one should prepare his bed in a comfortable chamber. Seeing him desirous to go in the morning he should give him leave.

37-38. O best ones, I shall tell you how a guest should be honoured with hospitality if the householder is unfortunately not wealthy. When guests have come he should devoutly offer them (a) grass (seat) etc. If there is no grass seat he should not devoutly say to him: "Sit on the ground."

39-41. For washing his feet he should give him excellent water. Then with sweet words he should ask in a friendly way about his health etc. Then he should devoutly give him fruit etc.

for eating. Without that an intelligent person should not gladly present himself (to the guest). And he should say: "O guest, I am a great sinner, very poor. I desire to offer you (worship with) devotion. But the destiny is opposing."

42-44. The poor one who has avoided honouring a guest in this manner and not anyone else fallen from his duty, would obtain the fruit as stated (in holy texts). The religious merit earned during crores of existences, of the householder from whose house a guest goes unhonoured, perishes. Viṣṇu would instantly remove the sin committed during crores of existences, of him who honours with devotion just one guest.

45-46. I am telling the truth. I am saying what is beneficial. I am making a firm statement. A householder does not go to heaven without carefully honouring a guest. It is truth, (nothing but) the truth. It is the repeated truth. For householders going to heaven is not (possible), is not (at all) possible, except by honouring a guest.

47-51. In the Dvāpara age there was a cowherd known as Jñātidharma. He knew all the ways of life. His wife was called Śrīvallabhā. He who served his kinsmen did all (good) acts. With his wife he lived in Saurāṣṭra. O brāhmaṇas, due to the movement of bad planets Indra did not shower water for twelve years. Therefore, there was a very great famine. During that great famine, the inhabitants of that country were distressed, and all of them gave up even the limit (of decorum). The great meditating saint Jñānabhadra, with his wealth lost due to the great famine, became very much distressed in the age called Dvāpara.

52-53. Seeing his wife and sons distressed with hunger, he with the brāhmaṇa's consent(?), went to the land at the foot of a mountain to eat fruits and roots. O you two best brāhmaṇas, the long-lived one, who was hungry, found one pumpkin gourd at the border of the land at the foot of the hill.

54-56. That very glorious best brāhmaṇa Jñānabhadra, being delighted on getting the fruit, speedily went (back) to his house. O brāhmaṇas, in the meanwhile, when the clouds had covered the sky, as it were, with dark blue feet, it rained with powerful showers. The sage's entire body was bathed with that shower. A forester, afflicted with cold, went to (his) house from the forest.

57-63. Seeing the guest afflicted with cold, he saluted him by (bowing) his head. He then devoutly gave him a grass-seat and water for washing his feet etc. Then with that guest only making an intelligent talk with sweet words the cowherd along with his wife diligent in serving her lord, remained with a composed mind. The chaste lady was delighted on having, with effort, secured a pumpkin gourd and gave a part to him after cutting it (into parts). Then that hospitable cowherd who had become weak due to fasting for twentyone days gladly gave a large part (of the fruit) to the guest. Then that chaste housewife highly devoted to her husband also gladly gave that (other) part (of the fruit) to the guest. O best brāhmaṇa, the guest having eaten both the parts (of the fruit) of (i.e. meant for) that noble couple, was very much delighted. The two with firm devotion worshipped the guest like Viṣṇu.

64. Having rested there only at night, he went in the morning after a long time after having bathed. (The two) passed twentyone days in fasting.

65-66a. Then that noble couple died. Due to the efficacy of that religious merit the noble-hearted couple obtained absorption into Viṣṇu, difficult to be obtained even by meditating saints.

66b-67. Due to the efficacy of their religious merit and the worship of the guest that they had done, the famine in the kingdom came to an end. The people were extremely happy and were free from grief and diseases.

68. They were rich in wealth and grains and were highly devoted to religion. The bandits there disappeared, and the king protected the people.

69-70. People were engaged in their own practices (i.e. practices laid down for their respective castes), and the clouds rained as desired. Crores of the ancestors and successors of the two, being freed from sins due to that act only obtained salvation. They were blemishless, endowed with wealth and were alone honoured by all the people.

71a. The progeny of the two grew without grief and diseases.

Lomaśa said:

71b-72a. I have told you the importance of the worship of

a guest along with its history. O brāhmaṇas, what else do you desire to hear for your pleasure?

Vyāsa said:

72b-76a. When that Lomaśa, rich in austerities was speaking like this, a black mouse, seized by death came up from its hole. Seeing that black mouse to have come from the hole, Pavitra, beside himself with anger got up, repeatedly speaking like this: "This wicked mouse of a sinful heart digs (the ground of) the hermitage with its sharp teeth at night, and destroys domestic things. For all the castes pity is said to be the best. It should be shown to all living beings, but not to wicked ones."

76b-80a. Speaking like this, O best brāhmaṇa, with a very sharp iron arrow he killed the mouse that had committed sins and the death of whom had approached. That rat, with its body bathed (i.e. wet) with the streams of flowing blood, fell on the ground with its consciousness affected due to agony, O brāhmaṇa sage. Seeing the mouse fallen, the kind, best brāhmaṇa, wailed loudly and speedily got up. Taking an excellent tulasī leaf from his own ear, he put it into the mouse's mouth, on its head and ears.

80b-82a. "O mother, O goddess Tulasī, O you causing delight to Govinda, give the best position to this mouse who has committed sins." O best brāhmaṇa, he who obliged all the world, loudly uttered the sound (i.e. the words): 'Hari, Nārāyaṇa Ananta'.

82b-83a. The mouse, due to the touch of the tulasī leaf, and due to hearing Viṣṇu's name, was free from sins and became free from the bond of the worldly existence.

83b-86a. Then the messengers of the great Viṣṇu, who were endowed with all (good) characteristics, quickly came there in good chariots to take (the mouse) whose sins had gone (to Viṣṇu's abode). The mouse surrounded by the hosts of Viṣṇu's messengers got into a divine chariot and went to the highest place. The mouse, having stayed in Viṣṇu's abode for thousands of crores of yugas, and having secured knowledge there only, went to (i.e. obtained) final emancipation.

Vyāsa said:

86b-87. O best brāhmaṇa, I have told you the importance of goddess Tulasī. O glorious one, tell me what you desire to hear now.

CHAPTER TWENTYSIX

Conduct in the Four Yugas

Jaimini said:

1. O glorious one, tell me how will all people be (i.e. behave) when the very fierce Kali age has come.

Vyāsa said:

2-5. The first (age) is called Satya-yuga. In it the people—brāhmaṇas and others—were devoted to worshipping Viṣṇu, and were free from grief and diseases. All of them spoke the truth, all were kind, and all lived long. They were rich in wealth and grains. They were free from (doing) harm (to others) and from religious hypocrisy. All obliged others. All knew sacred treatises. O best brāhmaṇa, in Satya-yuga all people were like this. And the kings followed royal duties and protected people. Oh! Who can relate the merit and the glory of Satya-yuga?

6-8. In it no man practised unrighteousness. When Tretā-yuga came, Dharma became deficient in one foot. Some people had little unhappiness. Some resorted to kindness. People were engaged in meditating upon Viṣṇu. They were highly devoted to (performing) sacrifices and (giving) gifts. They were engaged in (following) the practices of castes and stages of human life. They were happy and of a composed mind. All the śūdras tilled the soil and served brāhmaṇas.

9-11. Brāhmaṇas were noble and had mastered the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas. They were averse to accepting presents. They were true to their words. They had curbed their senses. They were always engaged in penance and vows. They always worshipped Viṣṇu. When at the end of Tretā-yuga, Dvāpara-yuga arrived.

Dharma would be deficient in two feet and some men would have happiness and unhappiness. Some would be engrossed in sins, and some were pious.

12. Some lacked some virtues. Some men of high virtues were extremely unhappy. Some were happy.

13. Sometime a brāhmaṇa longed for receiving (a present). At some time or other kings harassed their subjects through greed for wealth.

14-17. Brāhmaṇas were very much given to Viṣṇu's worship, and śūdras served brāhmaṇas. When, O brāhmaṇa, in yuga after yuga Dharma became deficient (foot) by foot, then Vyāsa of the form of Viṣṇu divided the Veda. O best brāhmaṇa, in Kali-yuga which is the only abode of all sins, Dharma would be having one foot (only), and all people would be engaged in (committing) sins. Brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras will be very much addicted to sins, will be very voluptuous and cruel. They will censure the Vedas and indulge in gambling and stealing.

18-20. They will be engaged in cohabiting with widows in Kali-yuga. Certain brāhmaṇas, looking to their livelihood (only), will be acting very fraudulently. All will be exceedingly fond of women, all will drink intoxicating liquors. All will be engaged in sexual acts and snatch other's wealth. They will always ardently long for other's food. They will be averse to penance and vows. They will be bound by the company of heretics in Kali-yuga.

21-22. Brāhmaṇas following śūdras' practices, will be (vagrant devotees) wearing red garments. In Kali-yuga the accomplished one will reach a very low position. And the mean, being endowed with wealth, will go to a very high position. All men will give gifts to those who have obliged them.

23-24. Even with effort (being made) cāṇḍālas will not abide by brāhmaṇas. In Kali-yuga people will give false testimony through affection for their friends. They will talk impious ideas. They will lament over righteous thoughts. They will censure (people) in (their) absence. They will be cruel, and will speak sweetly in the presence of other (people).

25-26. Unchaste women will speak like chaste women to their husbands. Brāhmaṇas will harm other's wives and will sell their possessions. In Kali-yuga, people will sell their daughters.

All men will be subjugated by women. Women too will be very fickle.

27-29. In Kali-yuga men will be wicked-hearted. The earth will have few crops and clouds will have little water. They will also shower (water) at a wrong time. O Jaimini, in Kali-yuga cows will eat feces and will yield little milk. And undoubtedly that milk will be ghee-less. People will be given to self-praise. They will be intent on censuring others.

30. Boys will have short bodies, and will eat too much food. In Kali-yuga, brāhmaṇas will offer libations to the dead ancestors for religious hypocrisy.

31. All will be affectionate in words (only) till their mission does not succeed. All will laugh at (certain) people, seeing them to be devoted to piety.

32-33. People will prosper through wicked deeds. Therefore, people will be addicted to sins. And they will completely perish within ten or twelve years. (They will prosper) as water will increase in the rainy season. People will lose their youth in Kali-yuga.

34. A girl will conceive in her fifth or eighth year. Men will have many children and (therefore) they will be very unhappy.

35. All will long for taking (gifts), none will long for giving. In Kali (yuga) Mlecchas will be kings, addicted to sins.

36. In Kali-yuga people will be of one caste (only) in order to satisfy carnal desires. In the first division of Kali (yuga) men (will) censure Viṣṇu.

37-38. In the middle (part) of Kali (yuga) men will only recognise Viṣṇu's names. Brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, śūdras will have (but) one caste in Kali-yuga, and there will be only four castes.

39-40a. O best brāhmaṇa, whenever there will be a decrease in (the number of) the pious ones, it should be known that the sinners will be on the increase in Kali (yuga). O best brāhmaṇa, though I have described this Kali (yuga) to be fierce, yet O best among the virtuous, it has (one) great merit.

40b-41. In Satya (yuga) religious merit would be accomplished after twelve years. In Tretā (yuga) (it would be accomplished during half the period of that. In Dvāpara (it would be accompli-

shed) within a month. But it would be produced in a day and night in Kali-yuga.

42-44a. Therefore, in the mortal world men do not at all reach a good position. A man obtains that fruit in Kali-yuga merely by uttering (the name of) Viṣṇu, which he would obtain by worshipping Viṣṇu for twelve years in another yuga. Kali does not trouble that man who utters only one name of Viṣṇu in Kali-yuga in this world. This is the truth, the (only) truth. There is no doubt in it.

Jaimini said:

44b-46a. Every act becomes fruitless due to the lack of the purity of mind. You have told this before. Therefore, my mind gives wonder (i.e. is amazed). In Kali-yuga all lack the purity of mind. O preceptor, tell me how their acts would be (done).

Vyāsa said:

46b-47. A man should devoutly offer whatever act he does in Kali-yuga to the great Viṣṇu. Every act that is dedicated to Viṣṇu would be inexhaustible.

Vyāsa said:

48. O best brāhmaṇa, I have thus told you the entire account, having devoutly heard which a man would obtain liberation.

Sūta said:

49. Jaimini thus informed by that highest soul, became engaged in the employment of rituals, and went to the highest position.

50-52. Those men desiring liberation, who devoutly recite or listen to this Essence of the Employment of Rituals are freed from all fierce sins committed during many existences, and obtain liberation. There is no doubt about this. Those men who, desiring liberation, recite and listen to this, get whatever is desired by them through the auspicious favour of Lakṣmī's lord.

53. A man, reciting or listening to half a verse, or a verse, or a quarter of a verse, gets the desired fruit.

54. That man who, after writing or getting written this holy text, would worship it, obtains the fruit of Viṣṇu's worship only.

55. May this Purāṇa which is very secret, has come out from Vyāsa's mouth, is very charming, gives delight to Viṣṇu's devotees, pleases the Disc-holder (Viṣṇu), Murāri whose feet are for a long time saluted by gods and others and who is the lord of the entire world.

May auspiciousness prevail.
May it be dedicated to Viṣṇu.

End of the Treatise.

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